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HE THAT OVERCOMETH;

OR,

A CONQUERING GOSPEL.



HE THAT OVERCOMETH;

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A CONQUERING GOSPEL.

BY

W. E. BOARDMAN,

AUTHOR OF "THE HIGHER CHRISTIAN LIFE."



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HE THAT OVERCOMETH.



PART I. . . . LIFE.

PART II. . . . WORK.

PART III. . . . RESULTS.



HOPEFULLY and affectionately inscribed to Christian workers in ~~America~~ and Great Britain,—the noblest fraternity in the grandest work on earth,—with deep sympathy and earnest prayer that God our Saviour may crown their labours with the largest success, and give them to overcome and sit with Him in His throne, even as He overcame, and is seated with the Father in His throne.



PREFACE.

THE great thing required in the world to meet the enemies of truth, and to satisfy its friends, is a development of the life and power of the Gospel in Christian experience and Christian progress that shall demonstrate its divinity. Naturalistic philosophy seeks, with superhuman ingenuity, address, and plausibility, to divest the Bible and its religion of every supernatural feature. This effort we may meet logically by criticism against criticism, and argument against argument, but we can meet it effectually only by a practical demonstration of the supernatural power of our religion in what it does for and by us now.

When Peter and John were brought before the high authorities in Jerusalem, they and their religion were put upon trial, and might have been condemned; but these same authorities had amongst them the man who had been from his birth, for

more than forty years, a helpless, decrepit, dependent creature, now leaping and walking, and praising God ; and so they said that, " A notable miracle has been wrought amongst us, and we cannot deny it." They therefore, though determined to reject the Gospel, could not condemn either the Disciples or the Gospel. And there is but one way of silencing naturalism, and that is by power and presence of supernaturalism. When Christians come to be filled with the Holy Ghost, as it is their privilege to be through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the progress of the Gospel, and the miracles of grace and salvation, wrought by the Lord in response to their faith, will effectually shut the mouth and palsy the hands of the naturalistic school of philosophers, the world over.

Instead, therefore, of apologising for the supernatural in the Bible and in Christian experience, and endeavouring to account for all upon natural principles, and giving time and thought to the false course of minifying that which God has done and is doing, and so of making it appear reasonable to those who deny that there is anything supernatural in it, it becomes us rather to secure for ourselves, and endeavour to induce others to secure, such a degree

of faith in God our Saviour, and such unfoldings of things eternal, and such signal displays of His power and working, as shall put to silence all clamorous doubts, and all hostile words, and make it plain that there is a life divine, a kingdom of God, a religion whose very essence and excellence consists in its being altogether heavenly, though upon earth, and altogether godlike, though received, enjoyed, and manifested in man and by Him.

On the other hand, there is a tendency of unbelief to limit the sphere of the kingdom of God to worship, and the things of worship, thus excluding from its benign influence by far the largest part of what goes to make up life.

The effect of this is to take away from us the sweet presence and gracious aid of our blessed Saviour, rob Him of us, and us of Him, six-sevenths of the time, and hide Him from us, as if the veil between Him and us had never been rent in twain, even during the other seventh.

We need for ourselves, and for our work, that we may overcome and come off victors, through Him who hath loved us, to have the faith of Christ as our ever present-Saviour—as OUR Saviour, as our PRESENT Saviour, as our EVER-present Saviour, as our ever-

present SAVIOUR; and this in all places, and in all affairs. Then, too, we, alas! seem to see and know but little of what He is able and willing to do by us, as well as for us. He does no mighty works by us, because of our unbelief. He would do marvellous things for us, if we could and would only trust in Him, and call upon Him to do them.

In the hope of giving some cheering, stirring word from Christ, to those who may read it in aid of the removal of these evils, and the realisation of these great benefits, this book has been written, and is now cast upon the hands of Him who gave it, and of those to whom He may send it.

SKETCHES.

	PAGE
ADAM AND EVE,	13
A SCEPTIC SAVED,	19
CAIN AND ABEL,	53
THE PATRIARCH JOB,	64
A COLLEGE STUDENT,	92
THE OLD SERMONS v. THE NEW TESTIMONY,	123
DUDLEY TYNG,	135
THE FARMER-MISSIONARY,	139
ISRAEL'S MERCHANT-KING,	180
THE LOST EVIDENCE FOUND,	186
THE MERCHANT AND HIS NOTES IN BANK,	188
A CELEBRATED GERMAN OCULIST,	192
A HAPPY, BUT UNSUCCESSFUL MAN,	211
A SUCCESSFUL MAN IN DANGER,	214
A CHURCH FOUNDED,	224
A MAN AGGRESSIVE FOR A TIME,	232
A MAN AGGRESSIVE ALMOST TO THE END,	236
ST PAUL AND ST JOHN, TO THE END,	247

	PAGE
THE WIDOW AND THE ORPHAN,	250
EARLY HARDSHIP AND ESCAPE,	253
THE FIRST GREAT TRIUMPH,	255
A SECOND TRIUMPH,	258
WORK AND INCIDENTS OF EIGHT YEARS,	262
HIGHER LIFE ATTAINED,	268
A NEW POSITION,	270
THE OVERCOAT,	273
THE CASTAWAY,	275
THE EMBRYO CONGRESSMAN,	279
THE RINGLEADER,	281

CONTENTS.



PART I.—LIFE.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. MAN IN CREATION,	3
II. THE PERVERSION,	10
III. A CONVERSION,	19
IV. THE TEST,	48
V. ADVANCEMENT,	61
VI. OCCASIONS,	72
VII. THE SOURCE,	79
VIII. THE MEANS,	87
IX. THE NATURE,	95
X. ASCERTAINMENT,	102

PART II.—WORK.

I. WITNESSING,	113
II. LATENT POWER,	120
III. THE TRUE POSITION,	130
IV. THE FARMER-MISSIONARY,	139
V. LOYALTY,	151

CHAP.	PAGE
VI. SERVICE,	159
VII. WISDOM UNASKED,	169
VIII. WISDOM ASKED,	176
IX. GROUNDLESS RESTRICTIONS,	184
X. GIVING AND RECEIVING,	196

PART III.—RESULTS.

I. EFFICIENCY,	207
II. SPECIAL TOKENS,	217
III. SUCCESS PARTIAL,	230
IV. SUCCESS COMPLETE,	239
V. A WOMAN'S WORK,	250
VI. SURPRISES,	293

PART I.

LIFE.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

MAN IN CREATION.

“What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou regardest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels: thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.”—PSALM viii. 4-6.

MAN was made for dominion over nature, and subordination to God.

The laws of nature are flexible to the touch of man's superior power, and docile in his service.

The physical forces are God's ministers, waiting on his pleasure. He bids one do this, and it does it; and another do that, and it obeys. He sends out His lightnings, and the light shines upon the earth; He sheds hoar-frost like wool, and locks all nature in icy winter; He makes the sun to rise and shine, and it is day, and every living thing is warmed in his beams; He makes darkness cover the earth, and all things seek their rest. When the universe was a

chaos of original elements, without form and void, and darkness covered the abyss, God said, Let there be light, and there was light. The instant the command was given, the necessary force obeyed, the necessary elements combined, and light sprang forth in the place of darkness, and lighted up the night of chaos with the face of day.

Even so God has given man, by reason of his intelligence, power to say in his sphere and in his way, Let there be light, and there will be light—light in our dwellings, and in our cities, and along our coasts.

Whilst the worlds as yet were in one wide unseparated universe of matter, without form, and void, the command of God went forth to divide the mass, separate world from world, round each into form, condense them into solid globes, with a firmament between; and His obedient ministers, the forces of motion, gravitation, attraction, combination, heat and light, wrought the work at His bidding, moulded the worlds as a potter moulds his vessels, scooped the deep sea beds, lifted up the mountains, ploughed the river channels, spread out the valleys, rounded off the hills, stretched forth bays and lakes, and landlocked harbours and open roadsteads, all suitable and ready for the human race.

Even so man, for all his purposes, and within the circle of his own appointed dominion over nature, takes earth from its bed, ore from the mines, wood from the forest; selects for himself what he will, and moulds it to his purpose.

God gave His command, Let the earth be clothed with vegetation, and filled with living creatures ; and the forces of life, vegetable and animal, came forth at his bidding, and covered the earth with ten thousand forms of vegetation, and enlivened it with myriad varieties of creatures.

And man, for his purposes, plants and sows, prunes and grafts, crosses, multiplies, and improves ; commands the vital forces for his use, and the cereals, the vine, the apple, the orange, the fig, spring forth and take the place of the thistle and the thorn ; and the horse, the ox, the cow, the sheep, and all creatures docile and serviceable, surround him to yield him service.

It is the custom to speak of the laws of nature as inflexible—standing in the way, an insuperable barrier to all special providence, miracles, and answers to prayer. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Nothing can be more flexible, docile, and obedient to the power and purposes of God or man than the laws of nature. They are perfectly adapted to subserve moral government, and special providence, human and divine.

True, the laws of nature are unchangeable,—the same in all ages and in every clime : like cause produces like effect. But in this very immutability of nature's laws lays one of their chief virtues as the servants of God and man. This it is which makes them reliable and faithful. If, when man kindles a fire to cook his food or create his steam, cold should

sometimes be produced instead of heat, fire would not be the reliable servant that it is; and if, when he puts his plates of zinc into his pots of acid, the action developed should sometimes prove explosive instead of quiet, he could not rely upon it to carry his messages to the ends of the world, over land and under sea, as now, for it might destroy him instead of doing his bidding.

Now, as the apostle says, we do not yet see all things put under man. But we do see that all things were made to be put under him, and he was made on purpose to be set over all the works of God. Little by little we are mastering the laws of nature, and converting them into our obedient servants. Already we make light and heat serve us in ten thousand ways, and we are upon the verge of greater conquests now than ever before in their creation and use. Already we take the water from its quiet, native streams, or lake or ocean beds, or artesian depths, with wood from the forest, or peat from the bog, or coal from the mine, and fire from the flint and steel or match prepared, and so create a vapour to waft us and our commerce over sea and land, and do everything we can conceive almost, except only to transport us, eagle-like, through the air; and there is no telling that even this is not in store for us. Already we command the lightnings, and tame them down to docility, whilst yet they lose nothing of their swiftness in our service.

Perhaps, if we had been true in our own subordination to our God, nature would have been true in

its subordination to us. As it is, we see our dominion daily on the increase, and keeping step with the progress of God's dominion over us. The age of Bibles is also the age of steam, and the time of missions is also the era of electricity. Perhaps if we should even now become more docile to the sway of God, nature would yield to us more readily. Perhaps the design of God is to complete the sway of His kingdom in the hearts of men, at the same time that He restores completely the sway of man in his dominion over nature.

So much is certain : man was made for dominion over nature, has gained it in part, and is gaining it more and more from day to day.

God created man, and placed him in the garden to dress it and to keep it. The garden is the world. Man was placed upon the earth to be its gardener. God gave man all the fruits of the garden for his use, and forbade nothing to him but the deadly fruit of evil. The forces of nature—heat, light, electricity, life, and all besides—are man's to dress and keep, to control, improve, and use. Nothing is denied to him in all, or from all, save the fatal fruit of evil. This he may not touch, or he will die. However fair it may be to the eye, or however good it may seem for food, or however desirable it may appear to make him wise, he must not touch or taste it, upon pain of death. All the rest is his ; his to command, his to use, his to enjoy, his to employ, for the glory of his God.

So much for man's dominion.

His intended subordination is no less certain, no less clear. The same intelligence which fits him for sway over nature is his adaptation for God's sway over him. To know the laws of nature is to hold dominion over them. To know God is to understand His dominion over us. He who has mastered the knowledge of any law of nature has that law under his control, and he who has had God revealed to him in any relation to himself, has learned the sway of God in that relation in his soul.

The threefold constitution of man, as a reasonable, sentient, voluntary being, fits him alike to rule over nature, and be ruled over by his God—to rule in the operation of nature's laws, and to have God rule in his own thoughts, feelings, plans, and purposes. The same powers and capacities by which, in their relations to the world, man is lord of creation, cause him, by their right use in their relations to God, to be His servant.

Man's rightful kingdom is in the world; God's rightful kingdom is in man himself. God made the world for man to dwell in and rule over; and He made man to be His own habitation and His own dominion.

Nature was not made to rule over God or man, but to be ruled over by both, each in his own way and for his own purposes.

Nature was not made to obstruct the purposes of God or man, or to be a barrier between the two, but to serve both God and man. Nature was not constituted to prevent God's providence for man, but to

subserve it. The laws of nature were not created to prevent the prayers of man to God, or the answers of God to man, but to subserve both, even as the telegraphic power enables man to ask of his fellow-man and receive the answer.

Nature was not made to prevent the use and display of God's power of miracles, but to enable Him to show His perfect command of nature when occasion should require it by His supernatural power in the miracles He should work.

In the paradise lost, man, doubtless, stood in His normal place as lord of nature and servant of God. The Lord ruled in him, and he ruled in the realm of nature. Nature served man as his home and his dominion, and he served God as his habitation and his realm. Rebellion had not blinded the mind of man to the glory of God as his King, on the one hand, nor, on the other, to his own power over the laws of nature. But in fact, and in glorious measure, God reigned in man, and man reigned in the world.

The paradise regained will be the complete restoration of both the kingdom of man in nature, and the kingdom of God in man.

Then will be realised with all, the other beatitudes so sweetly proclaimed by the King ; these two especially :—

“Blessed are the pure in heart ; for they shall see God.” And

“Blessed are the meek ; for they shall inherit the earth.”

CHAPTER II.

THE PERVERSION.

“ And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.”—GEN. i. 31.

PERVERSION is the great principle of evil : all things are right when rightly used ; all things are wrong when put to an evil purpose. The best things, by perversion, become the worst ; and the most precious become the vilest. Fire is an excellent servant, but when it escapes the fender, and seizes upon the house and furniture and family, it is a terrific foe. Steam, rightly applied and carefully controlled, speeds us and our freights over continents and seas ; but, given the upper-hand, it would quickly land us in the grave, or send us to the ocean depths, The electric wires, used for truth, may make us wise ; but used to beguile, they have cost many losses in the money-market. Food, intended for human sustenance, if gormandised, may cause untimely death. Appetite, by which, if controlled by judgment, food is welcomed with happy zest, and appropriated with the greatest benefit, soon makes a man a beast if pampered and obeyed. Thirst for knowledge, legitimately indulged and cultivated, is a power for

elevation and salvation; but if followed out into forbidden regions, as it was by our first parents in the garden, and as it is by many of their children, who see the fair fruit of sin, and venture to pluck and eat, then it is a power for degradation and swift destruction.

Of all perversions in this world of ours, the greatest and the worst is that of man himself. If man is right, he will put all things to right use, and himself first of all; whilst, if he is wrong, he will pervert all things to his own use in the wrong.

God made man to be in unison with Himself in all his principles, affections, and ways, and to use all things for good to himself and others. To insure this unison God made man also to be in union with Himself by a bond as real and as close as that between the soul and body. Standing in this union with his God, man is right; perverted from it, he is wrong. Hence the grand struggle in the world between the powers of light and darkness has always been, is now, and always will be, for man himself,—on the one hand, to make and keep him right, and on the other, to pervert him from God and ensnare him in the ways of evil.

Next to the advent of Christ the fall of man is the great event of history. And what was the fall but a change of heart from God to Satan and the world, even as now, in every case of regeneration by the Spirit, there is a change of heart from Satan and the world to God and his service?

The story of the original perversion is full of interest now, and if we could hear it, as I trust we shall in good time, together with that of their subsequent conversion, from the lips of our first parents, oh, what a flood of light it would throw upon us! How, in their own experience, we should see at once the gate of life and the gate of death in contrast!

Thanks be to God our Saviour for his words concerning us of the Gentile world, that "many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." Aye, *sit down with them*. That is the way to listen to their grace-taught stories from their fire-touched lips. Sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and if with them, then also with Adam and Eve, Abel, Enoch, and Noah, and all the children of God of every age and clime.

Will not that be glorious? What a world of wonders, new and old, there will be to hear and tell! What a clearing up of mysterious things! What an unfolding of the riches of glory both of the wisdom and knowledge of God which have been hidden from all the generations past, and which now are past finding out! What an unveiling of the fulness of his love which passeth knowledge! And what a wealth of heart history, now unknown, will be opened up to be known and read of all!

For this, however, we must bide our time, and await the sessions of the saints in heaven. Meanwhile we have such fragmentary sketches, of some of

them at least, and of sinners too, as will enable us to profit by both their wrong steps and right ones. Adam and Eve stand alone in the record of their first great revolution of heart and life, the change against God, though millions and billions have followed them in the second—the change to God.

Yet, although we have no other instance to throw its light upon that of these two, and aid us in learning exactly what the change was, the principles involved are so clear, and the circumstances, before and after, as well as during the scene of their perversion, are so graphically portrayed, that we can hardly be at a loss in tracing the change in its essential features.

One thing concerning our first parents before their perversion is quite clear and certain—they were exactly what God intended they should be. And what was that? They were temples of the living God. Even those who have begun their earthly career as fallen creatures, but have been born anew, have become God's temples. And how much more perfectly so must have been those two while yet in their original unfallen state! God made man for this very purpose. We are content to erect habitations for ourselves of wood, which fall into decay perhaps before our own frail bodies, or of brick or stone; and if we build of marble, with elegance of style and amplitude of dimensions, it is a great matter, and excites general admiration. God is contented only with a temple of immortal souls. Our

dwelling are unconscious, and know nothing of us, however much we know of them. God's temples are to be conscious ones, knowing him even as he knows them. The piers and panels of our abodes of greatest luxury encase mirrors which give back to us our own face and form in truthful reflection, or are overhung with pictures, rare and beautiful, all unconscious of what they are or what they do. God's temple is mirrored on every side with glasses as sensible as they are truthful, in which He himself is reflected in all His loveliness in every aspect and attitude, and is enjoyed as perfectly as He is reflected. Such living temples of the living God were our first parents before their perversion. What were they afterward, before their conversion? Deserted temples.

God made Adam and Eve to be his children and heirs, and they were so. He was a father to them, and loved them as His dear children; and they, in turn, loved Him and revered Him as a father. He made them heirs of all things, and of Himself—the greatest and the best of all; and they enjoyed all things—Him above all—richly, freely, before the fall. How was it afterward? They were children of the wicked one, to whose tempting voice they yielded, and heirs of his dark treasures of wrath against the day of wrath.

God made them living souls in this double sense—that they had living, conscious powers of mind and heart, to know and love the things of time and sense,

whilst they should also know Him, the living God, and love Him and serve Him supremely. And they did know Him, and love Him, and serve Him with all their heart before the fall. How was it afterward? They knew Him indeed, but not to love Him. They knew Him only to fear and dread His presence and His justice.

The steps by which their sad perversion was effected are quite familiar to us all. The arch enemy beguiled them. First he stung the woman with a taunt of her thralldom—and there are few things we abhor as we do thralldom, or take such pride in as in liberty. He asked her, Hath God said thou shalt not eat of the fruits of the garden? Besides the taunt, this question implied a charge against God himself as unreasonable and arbitrary; as if he had said, Hath God placed the fruit of the garden before you in profusion, beautiful and good, and then arbitrarily commanded you not to touch it? Eve parried this double thrust as best she could by answering that God had not restricted them at all, except from the fruit of the one tree, and that because death was in it.

This effort at defence gave a vulnerable opening for the final fatal blow which proved her death. Thou shalt not surely die, said he, for God doth know that in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt be as God, knowing good and evil. This blow cut down her faith in God, and so she fell. For seeing the fruit, that it was pleasant to the eye and good for food—and believing what Satan said, that it was

desirable to make one wise, and disbelieving the word of God that it would cause her death—she took it and ate, and gave to her husband, and he did eat. And their eyes were opened. Alas for them ! A sad change had passed upon them ; a complete and radical revolution had overtaken them. What was it ?

Death. The death that never dies. We have come to look upon the dissolution between soul and body as death ; but death, the penalty of sin to our first parents, was the severance of the soul from God ; and in the very day, and hour, and act of their transgression, this death passed upon them. They gave up their trust in God, and so abandoned him, and thrust Him out from His throne and home in their heart of hearts ; and thus they became deserted temples. In the same moment and volition they gave their confidence to the tempter, and followed his counsel, and gave up their filial relations to God, and took position, without knowing what they were doing, as children and heirs of the wicked one. They ceased to live in God, and God in them, and so were dead while yet alive ; dead to God, dead to life eternal.

The first fruits of their perversion were soon apparent. No doubt they were greatly lifted up by their new acquirements of knowledge and independence. Knowledge, even that which is heavenly—as St. Paul, who surely knew, has told us—puffeth up ; and how much more that which is from beneath ? And freedom to do what you please, right or wrong, is apt to beget exultant feeling. Soon, however, a

dark shadow overspread the false splendour of their bad attainments. The first sound of the voice of God 'in their ears filled their hearts with dread and fear. He was all changed to them. They were perverted from Him, and they no longer saw Him as He really was. They hated Him, and thought He hated them. They put darkness for light in regard to him. He loved them still, but they did not see it or believe it. The night of eternal darkness in regard to God began at once to settle down upon their souls. They no longer loved God as their father, but hated Him as a tyrant, and were in terror of Him as their Judge; wherefore they ran not to meet Him, but ran to hide themselves from His presence. And then, when called from their hiding-place, they answered God's plain and searching questions by selfish excuses, and sought to lay off blame from themselves—the man upon the woman, and the woman upon the tempter. Thus pride and darkness, followed by fear and dread, selfishness and remorse, budded forth and bloomed out in all their ugly promise immediately after their perversion. Happily for them, the grace of God arrested them very quickly, and the faith of God seems to have been restored to them, and life eternal kindled anew in their souls. Had it not been so, a whole eternity would have witnessed their awful progress in this diabolical career; and who can measure the depth of sin and misery, darkness and despair, hatred and remorse, into which they would have sunk?

How striking the contrast between perversion and conversion ; between spiritual death, and spiritual birth and life !

Perversion is turning from God to Satan and the world.

Conversion is turning from Satan back to God.

Death is the severance between the soul and God.

The new birth is a reunion between God and the soul. Eternal death is the perpetual disunion between the soul and God, with all the darkness, hostility, corruption, remorse, and despair following in its train. And life eternal is the ever-abiding, never-ending presence of God, with all the sunshine of His peace and joy in us as His living temples.

CHAPTER III.

A CONVERSION—A SCEPTIC SAVED : THE STORY TOLD BY HIMSELF.

“Wherever there is a soul, there is a paradise lost or a paradise regained.”

EARLY INFLUENCES.

WITH the blood of a royal Christian ancestry, I inherited also a traditional Christian faith ; and yet my early years passed without much religious instruction. My father and mother, though traditional believers, were somewhat slow to follow the ancestral example of entering early the gates of life ; in fact, they remained unconverted until after some of their own children led the way.

It was a country place where we lived, and without a church. Certain zealous ministers came once a month, and held service in our little school-house ; and I remember going once a year to a village not far away, where my mother’s mother dwelt in a cottage by herself, near her eldest son, to visit, and there attending church from time to time in a larger room of the village academy. But of all these services not a vestige remains in memory except the general fact, and some quaint peculiarities of the ministers themselves. Well may I remember these

in the case of the village pastor. Sitting one day with four or five other boys on a form directly in front of the desk, we were struck by the inevitable disjunctive conjunctive phrase, "And but again," with which he cut off, by sledge-hammer blows, and welded again with fervent heat, the chain of his fiery logic; and every time the preacher in thunder-tones used these words, we, in a tittering whisper, passed them round amongst ourselves. My grandmother saw this, and when the door of her cottage closed upon herself and me, shutting us in, and shutting out all the world beside, she impressed the matter by a stinging birch lecture that for once made a smart lad of me, and left a tingle in my memory which has remained even until now.

Another scarcely less impressive lecture was afterwards drawn down upon me in connexion with one of our school-house services at home. One beautiful summer's Sunday morning,—and oh, how exquisite the summer mornings were in the bright climate amongst my native hills,—I obtained a somewhat reluctantly-given permission from my father to bathe in our sweet crystal Susquehanna river as a preparation for the clean Sunday suit and the sacred service. The deliciously cool waters, and the marvellous sport of swimming and diving with a merry company of fellow-bathers, enticed us to remain longer than we ought to have done before coming out; and then, when out, the warming exercise of running and leaping soon brought a heat and perspiration which ex-

cused and induced a second bath, followed by exercise again, and this by still another bath, and so the time wore away, and the hour of service went by.

My father was a kind man, and seldom found it necessary to use the rod; yet he had the wisdom to "command his children after him," and loved them too well to spare them when the alternative was that they must temporarily smart or be permanently spoiled. It was with more pain to himself, I am sure, than to me, that he laid upon my back on this occasion the weight of my offending; and probably I remember it all the more vividly, because it was so seldom that my dues in this coin were received. Nevertheless, even my own sense of justice, which heartily approved the faithfulness of my father in this instance, as it had done that of my grandmother in the other, could not increase very much my love for religious services, costing me, as they had, two of the very few experiences of a striped jacket in all my life.

MY GREAT PERIL.

The one incident of my boyhood, however, which I remember as having a powerful bearing upon my character and destiny as a responsible, immortal being, was that of,—what shall I call it?—a spurious conversion, shall I say? Hardly that; but no matter, I will describe it. Oh, how much reason have I to bear in mind every feature of it! Many and many a time have I turned it over, and weighed

it from that day to this; and at every turn, for years, I drew from it something to smooth my way into a trap set for me by the arch enemy, which had proved my eternal ruin but for the grace of God.

I have been in many perils first and last—perils by land and water, in war and peace, in sickness and by violence, from carelessness and from malice, by temptation and perversion, but never in any other so great as that of scepticism. Thanks be to God for the boundless grace which wrought by wonderful counsel and excellent working for my deliverance. And thanks be to God for the grace, still further, by which both the trap and the deliverance from it, together with the incident referred to, by which my way into the trap was facilitated, have been turned to good account, since my deliverance, both as a shield from fiery darts aimed at my own soul, and as a light upon the dark path of many another one whom Satan was trying to lead captive at his will.

MY FALSE STEP, AND HOW IT WAS TAKEN.

The incident happened when I was about thirteen years old. A beloved schoolmate, somewhat older than myself, whilst away from home, became a very joyous Christian convert, and returned to relate the story of his happiness to all his schoolfellows and friends. One after another gave evidence that his experience had deeply impressed them. The interest grew and extended day by day quite naturally, and some time passed before any extravagant demonstration

appeared. At last, however, the excitement reached a stage quite remarkable for such a secluded corner of the world. Our school-house was the grand gathering-place. The leadership was in hands without experience. We lacked, for safe and steady working, the balance-wheel of discretion, and our meetings were not conducted after the orderly apostolic rule of speaking and praying one at a time. How much more good might have been secured, and how much less evil endured, if, with the fullest liberty in the spirit, there had been the fullest wisdom in the process, who can tell? Some semblance of order was observed during the first half-hour in our meetings, but after that came a general confused breaking-up for a new order, if confusion can be called order. Notice having been given by the leader, a space was cleared in the centre of the room, into which all who desired the prayers of Christians were urged, both by public and personal appeal, and often by the almost resistless grasp of eager hands. Around these who were to be prayed for gathered in a circle those who were to pray for them. When the ring was formed, the verse of a hymn was sung; then all knelt down and began to cry aloud, many voices at once—some for mercy, others for the power of God; one in mere ejaculations, another in continuous supplications; some in distress, others in triumphant joy; making altogether a Babel of noise quite overpowering. By and by, one of those enclosed in the circle would rise to his feet and

shout, when all would respond in loud "amens" and "glory, hallelujahs;" and rise, as if by simultaneous impulse, throw their arms over each other's shoulders, and strike up some lively chorus or familiar hymn, and sing, swaying back and forth all together to the time of their music.

In one of these meetings, although I had not the first ray of intelligent conviction of sin or need of salvation, I allowed myself to be dragged into the circle by the kindly violence of over-urgency and the warm grasp of a friendly hand, and there, by the side of another lad, I knelt down. Carried along by blind impulse, following his lead, I cried out in a loud voice for mercy: then when, a few moments later, he rose up and shouted, and everybody else followed suit, I sprang up and shouted too.

After this, just when I had begun to have some sense of my false position, I felt the presence of a strong hand upon my shoulder, and looking up, saw standing outside of the circle a near friend of my father, with the expression of painful sympathy for me on his face, and through all the din, his whispered words reached my ear, saying "Come" (calling me by the familiar diminutive of my name), "Come with me; your father wants you." Stooping down, I slid through and passed out of the ring, and, with my father's friend, out of the house, conscious that many eyes were upon us. The truth flashed upon me in a moment that I had played the fool. The power of sympathetic impulse had been too strong for my weak

judgment and will, and I had been rushed into an utterly false position. Oh, how painful were my reflections in that homeward walk! It was less than a mile, and yet it seemed a whole day's journey. Still, it was all too quickly at an end. I would fain have walked on until night, and through the night into a new day, if so I could have walked off my painful thoughts, and come out into a new and true position before the bar of my own mind.

Very well I knew that the whole matter would be talked over in every household of our little world—all the world to me, and that I should be reckoned, first among the converts, and afterwards among backsliders. Oh, I thought if I had only seen all this before, but alas I was blind, and led like a blind fool into this wretched position! And what shall I do? What can I do? Shall I come out frankly with the truth? That would be right and noble, but then I shall stand self-confessed a fool. Shall I keep aloof and say nothing? Then I shall be set down as a backslider, fickle, and unreliable. Or shall I keep along as best I may, and quietly allow my zealous friends to number me amongst themselves? That would be to take upon myself the conscious stamp of hypocrite, which I could never do. The quandary was a painful one, and in my indecision I left the whole matter to right itself as best it might, and suffered in my reticence and sensitiveness untold agonies for many days. Thus ended this singular experience. I shall have occasion to mark both the

evils and the grace which have followed now through many years in its train.

Not all who came within the circle of this excitement, perhaps not even a majority of them, were urged blindly on into any such false step as that taken by me. Some there were who have given the evidence of cheerful, steadfast devotion to the cause of Christ, life-long, and of triumphant faith in hour of death, that they were truly converted to God.

My own brother, two years my senior, during this excitement, took a decided stand as a Christian, and it was through his subsequent testimony that the Lord was pleased to deliver me at last from the great peril of my life. So in the very time and place and circumstances wherein I was ensnared, or prepared for the snare that awaited me, my unknown Guardian and Saviour prepared also the hand that should rend the snare from my limbs.

MY FATAL COMPANIONSHIP AND FOOLISH PHILOSOPHISINGS.

Shortly after this period my brother left home to enter upon an apprenticeship, in a village not far away, as a merchant's clerk. Two years more I remained in school, and then, following his example, entered upon a course of training for a business life in a town still more remote. Here I fell into a most fascinating companionship with a fellow-clerk who was much my superior in years. His knowledge of literature was something marvellous to me. The

interest and delight he took in introducing me to his favourite authors charmed and flattered me. Unhappily, the books he admired the most were less elevated in morals than in style, more elegant than chaste, but none the less fascinating on that account; and no thanks to them if the foundations of virtue in my heart were not completely swept away. Sometimes too they incidentally jostled my hereditary veneration for the Bible, and shook it to its base. Very soon a desire began to grow, insensibly at first, in my mind to throw off the shackles of all belief in religion, and be able to follow my own inclinations, right or wrong, without fear of future punishment. This wish soon became father to the fact. The most serious obstacle in the way was the traditional belief in religious experience as a supernatural work wrought in the hearts of men by the Holy Spirit. My *faux pas* already described facilitated the speedy removal of this difficulty. Had I not felt the power of sympathetic impulse in times of high excitement to make one do and say things absolutely groundless and absurd? And for the rest, had not imagination force enough to create all that was supposed to be supernatural?

How easy would it be, under the influence of zealots like my schoolmates, and by means of the vivid pictures drawn by them, for one to think and feel himself a guilty sinner in the hands of an angry God, with the silken thread of life only to prevent his falling into the burning lake? And then again,

as a vessel at sea, rocked over by the waves upon one side, is sure to roll the other way as far, what more natural than that the like vivid pictures of a forgiving Saviour, who counted his life not dear, but freely gave it up to save the sinner, should turn the tide of gloom into a tide of joy, and replace the fear of hell by the hope of heaven? In this way, by the twofold force of sympathetic impulse and an inflamed imagination, I was able to account for the phenomena of experimental religion entirely to my own satisfaction, and make the prevalent idea that it is a supernatural work appear absurd and superstitious. As for the Bible, that was easily set aside. And a specious philosophy of the universe, essentially pantheistic, set me at ease concerning any future state for man. I said to myself there is no personal God like the Jehovah of the Bible; the God of nature is nature itself. All things are God, and God is all things. Matter and mind alike are parts of God. Man's body is material, and is just so much of the material part of God. It comes from the earth, and at death returns to the earth again, dust to dust, and ceases for ever to have a separate personal form, and its identity as a human body is at a final end. Man's soul, in like manner, emanates from the spiritual portion of what we call God, and at death it returns again to Him who gave it. Coming as it did from the residue of the Spirit, where it had no separate personal conscious identity as an individual being, it returned again to the same unconsciousness

at death, and its individuality, absorbed in the general mass, ceased for ever; and thus was realised the Bible phraseology in regard to both the body and the soul—the body returned to the dust from whence it came, and the spirit to God who gave it.

Crude and shallow as these theorisings were, they were profound and beautiful to me; all the more so, too, because I had a parental fondness for them. Although, no doubt, as old as the days of Cain and the antediluvian children of his perverseness, they were new and fresh to me, and as purely original as if they had not already been elaborated in millions of perverted hearts before.

A REMARKABLE DRIVE—THE TURNING-POINT.

Five years passed smoothly on, and every day my sceptical delusions grew stronger, until I became entirely confident that they never could be overthrown. Yet at that very moment the leverage was ready which was destined in an hour to overthrow all this work of years; so little did I know what was prepared for me in the gracious forecast of Him whose very existence as a God of providence and grace I had theorised away.

Once a year my brother and I were wont in company to pay a visit *home*, as we still delighted to call the old birth-place, and a happy time it was to us. All the people greeted us with the warmest welcome, and the game and fish, nuts and fruits, seemed to await our coming and court our presence, for whoso-

ever's baskets and tables might be empty of these things, ours were sure to be full.

Our fifth annual visit was made at a period full of interest to us both. I was just out of my apprenticeship, and had commenced a promising and prosperous business on my own account, and my brother was on the eve of beginning a like enterprise for himself. Our plans and prospects afforded, of course, a great deal to talk about. Then, too, at our ages—twenty-one and twenty-three, it would have been strange indeed if no matters of the heart had sought mutual help in maintaining secrecy. Indeed, a thousand things pressed for utterance on the one side and the other as we journeyed homeward. Yet full as were our minds and hearts of other things, my theorisings were too expansive to be held down. The fact, too, that my brother had, seven years before, been a joyous Christian convert, but had meanwhile, as I knew full well, ceased all active participation in religious matters, and surrounded himself with gay and worldly companions, made me very anxious to sound him, and gain still farther confirmation for my sceptical position. I said to myself, Surely he has come to my conclusion, that religion is all superstitious nonsense, and no doubt he knows now that he was impelled by sympathetic excitement, and deceived by the power of his own imagination, stimulated by all he heard; therefore all I shall have to do to draw out a full confession of these facts will be to tell him the conclusion I myself have reached. So I ventilated

my views freely to him. All things favoured me. Our conveyance was a quiet, easy-going chaise, which made no noise, and Ned, the horse, though spirited, was wise and docile—a horse to be trusted anywhere. And my brother listened without a word of interruption, whilst I proceeded with the most perfect confidence of his approval. Indeed, I expected nothing else but a complacent appreciation of my profound theory of the universe, and a complete assent to my philosophy of the new birth. He listened in silence till I had finished, and paused for answer. Even then he said nothing, until his silence made me feel so uncomfortable that I asked him plainly what he thought about the matter; then, with a painful reluctance, he said in a low voice full of suppressed emotion (calling me by my first name), “I hate to say anything on this subject. My life, I know, has been such as to destroy the weight of anything I could say, and I am only afraid now that you will think worse of the truth I have to tell you than ever, because it is told you by one so far from being what he ought to be. I would give anything in the world at my command now rather than to answer your question, if I dared to let it go without reply; but as you have asked me, I feel bound by the interest I have in you as my own brother to give you an honest and decided answer. Your theorisings are very plausible, and might fully satisfy those who do not know the truth, but I *do know* them to be untrue; I do know that conversion, real conversion, is not produced, as you suppose, by

the power of sympathy and imagination, but must be the work of God." Then, to confirm this, he narrated his own experience, as it occurred seven years before. His sincerity could not be doubted, for his testimony was given, not with the zeal of a partisan, but with the reluctance of a witness from whom it was forced against his wishes. Then, too, he had been seven long years in circumstances which could not fail to tempt him, if possible, to believe religion a delusion. He assured me that in my theorisings about conversion I had failed to take into account the really important facts of the case. First, he said that the state of mind preceding conversion was essentially different from what I had described; that there was always an apprehension of the goodness of God, and of the sin of neglecting to love Him and serve Him, such as never could find place in the imagination without a revelation of God by the supernatural power of His Spirit in the heart, and that it was this supernatural revelation of God as inconceivably loving and lovely which caused the wickedness of unbelief, neglect, and rejection to appear so exceedingly sinful, and this led directly to repentance, which is simply turning with all the heart to God, to love and serve Him. "Then, again," he said, "the after-fruits are as distinctively divine. These are not, as you suppose, *mainly* the assurance of pardon and the hope of heaven. Whilst a sense of forgiveness, and the anticipations of a home in heaven, do often, and ought always to flow directly from conversion, and produce

their full measure of happiness, they are not the principal or even essential fruits of conversion. God himself as manifested in Christ, and revealed in the heart, is the one grand and glorious fountain of the convert's joy. The wisdom and power of God, as seen in the heavens and the earth, and especially the love of God, as unfolded in His Word, transport the soul out of itself, and out of its sins, and out of every selfish thought not only, but every thought of self, and fill it with the glory of God as the day is filled with sunlight. And this is a joy in God not only, but one which can come only by the revealing agency of God himself in the soul of man. Nor is this all. New views and feelings spring up in the converted heart such as were never there before, nor ever could be except by the power of God. Love supreme to God; self in the background. Love, tender, deep, and strong for everybody; perfect forgiveness to all enemies, whether asked or not; a peculiar love to all who love the Lord Jesus; a new and wonderful appreciation of the Christian character; a singular delight in silent prayer, which seems as easy and as constant as our breath; a wonderful joy in song, the burden of which is praise or prayer; an overflowing desire to go and tell everybody about the Saviour, and induce them to 'come and see Him' too; a living, loving, joyous sense of the presence of God in all things and everywhere; a new and tender endearment toward all one has loved before—brother, sister, father, mother, child, husband, wife, lover, friend—


and a complete overturning of ideas about the cardinal virtues of manhood, is found to have taken place. A lofty bearing is no longer reckoned as dignity, but meekness rather; a spirit which will not brook, but will resent and avenge insult and injury, is no longer held as the highest manliness, but a kindly forbearance and an unconquerable goodwill instead; neither wealth, nor wisdom, nor power, nor culture are seen any more to form the glory of man, but goodness rather, and especially the honour that comes from God. These, and others like them," said he, "are fruits which it never entered into the heart of man to conceive till revealed there by the Spirit of God himself."

When he had finished, my theories were all gone. These facts poured upon them a flood which swept away their sandy foundations, till they fell, and great to me was the fall thereof.

A SINGULAR COINCIDENCE.

It was a singular coincidence that this happened on the road, just where once my life had been saved almost as by miracle. The mountain approached the river so very closely there that the roadway had been cut out of the rock, forming what was known as *The Narrows*. The cliff lifted its lofty head above, overhanging the road, and on the other side a steep, rough, rocky precipice descended to the water's edge. And just here, in *The Narrows*, it had happened to me, while an infant in my mother's arms, to be

thrown over that very precipice. My father, seated by my mother's side in a chaise like the one we now were in, was driving along, when suddenly the chaise was overturned, and carrying with it horse and all, we rolled over and over to the bottom. Often and often have I heard my father and mother express their wonder that we were not all killed, and greatest of all, that we were not even badly injured. The horse and chaise were soon righted up in travelling order. Father escaped unharmed, mother was terribly frightened and somewhat bruised, and I carry yet the tiny scar of a wound inflicted by a broken shrub—a slight memento of a wonderful deliverance. And now here again, on this same spot, came another and more wonderful deliverance from a peril ten thousand times greater than the first. My vain, sceptical chariot, in which I was gliding along in the most complacent security toward the pit, was suddenly overturned, and rolled down, not to the water's edge alone, but into the river, and then swallowed up for ever, whilst I had escaped, not without mementoes of my deliverance never to be forgotten. Very soon I was righted up again, so as to resume conversation—not, however, on that subject. Vanity enough to inflate and lift a balloon had been let off, and I was sobered and made wiser. My mind was made up to put the matter to a practical test at the earliest convenient time, and so it was dismissed.



MY CONVENIENT TIME SEIZED UPON.

Our visit was made, business resumed, and the new enterprise, like the twelve yoke of oxen, or the wedlock, or the farm, was an ample excuse for putting the matter off.

Left to myself, or pressed only by the printed invitations, or the ordinary messengers sent to deliver them, I should have begged off for ever.

One Sabbath morning, however, the master of the feast sent a servant extraordinary to compel me to come in. It was my old minister from the village where I had served my apprenticeship, and common courtesy would not allow me to stay at home. His subject was the opportunities afforded by the passing visits of Jesus, from the incident of His restoring sight to blind Bartimeus on the road at the Judæan City of the Palms. He told us that there would be, two weeks hence, a "four days' meeting," and several well-known men of eloquence and zeal would come from places at a distance to take part in the proceedings, and, best of all, Jesus himself would be there, and that all who would might then profit by His passing presence, to have their eyes opened like Bartimeus. And as he told us this, his heart seemed to burn within him, and fill him with unwonted life and energy. I remember well how his great fist, trip-hammer-like (he was six feet three inches, and weighed three hundred pounds), came down upon the desk. as if to drive the facts he

uttered, home, and fasten them as a nail in a sure place. Whilst yet the thunder of his heavy words and blows were in my ears, the still small voice in my heart was whispering, "This is thy convenient time."

THE DARKEST HOUR.

When the meeting began, my arrangements were all made to attend it morning, noon, and night, to the end, in full expectation of receiving all that my brother's description had led me to expect. The first day was one of trial and gloom beyond any other of all my life before. The morning meeting—it was Thursday, and the meeting was to last through four days, Sunday included—was crowded, and, beyond precedent, impressive. So, and more, if possible, were the services of afternoon and evening. In the intervals between, meetings for special instruction to those who desired to receive it were appointed, and the place designated was on the public street, where all who entered would certainly be observed.

My first trial was that of going to this meeting. I desired, above all things, to have the proffered instruction, but I hated, above all things, to have anybody know it. To go in at that door would be equivalent to publishing my seriousness at the top of the street, and I could not bear to do it. My pride rose up against it. My dread of the eyes and tongues of the world, especially of my own young American world, was very great. And besides, what

if, after exposing myself to all this, I should fail at last, and find nothing in religion, or nothing of it for myself? The struggle in my soul was something awful, and nothing but the echo within of the powerful compulsory hand invisible without dragged my heavy feet to that door. Never did a door-handle before so burn the hand that grasped it, or a latch so strain the hand that lifted it, or a burden so weigh down the one that carried it—so it seemed to me. That was a crushing step to my pride and dread, but it served only to increase the crushing, bursting load in my heart. The instructions given were clear enough to those who gave them, but to me they were dark as Egypt, and mystic as the oracles of Delphos. The next day came, and repeated the first day's history. Interest deepened and extended. A large number sought special instructions, and a few found the light, Bartimeus-like, at the hands of Jesus. Every one coming forth with beaming face out of the gloom and darkness served to oppress me by the contrast more and more, until at last, the third day, the point of despair was well nigh reached. All along my cry had been for the new heart promised me. I thought I had only to ask it and receive, to knock and have it opened, to cry like Bartimeus and be called by the Saviour, and have the heavenly vision bestowed upon me. Like Job, I thought at last that my burdens were greater than I could bear; and in my heart I complained of God as one who hideth Himself.

My first step had been to seek the light of life by means of ministers and Christians, and accordingly I took every opportunity, public and private, to gain it in this way—and *failed*. Again and again and again, I was told to go myself directly to Christ himself. “Call upon Him,” “cast myself upon His mercy,” “submit to Him,” “trust Him,” “believe in Him,” “yield to Him,” “give Him my heart;” but these injunctions were without meaning or force to me, until I gave up all expectation or hope from men or meetings. Then, but not till then, I was prepared to appeal from these and all things else to the Lord himself. When all intermediate persons or means or measures were practically tried, and proved un-availing, I turned at last, and, Bartimeus-like, cried, “Jesus of Nazareth, have mercy on me.” And then I paid no attention whatever to the voices, whether of instruction or discouragement, around me, and cried so much the more. At first my cry was a blind one indeed. “It seemed to me,” as one has said, “as if I was praying to nothing in the dark;” or as another puts it, “My prayer seemed to go no higher than my head.”

The last day of the meeting came, and the last meeting of the day, and my soul was not saved. Oh! the weight of the load I carried to that meeting I can never describe. My heart was so heavy as to produce bodily weariness indescribable. The elasticity of youth seemed to have given place to the heaviness of age. My feet were reluctant and slow ;

my face, as I had glanced at it in the glass, told the tale of a sad, sorrowful, woe-begone soul.

THE CRISIS AND DECISION.

Yet I cared for none of these things. I forgot them all in the one absorbing cry to God for mercy. I took my place in the crowded assembly, mechanically rose when they rose, sat down when they sat down, heard the text when it was announced, and enough of the sermon to have it give shape to my thoughts; yet, ever and anon, like the bent bow set loose, my thoughts flew back to my burden, and to my cry for mercy. The text was the one which depicts Christ on the cross between the two malefactors, one on either hand, one reviling him and the other praying to him, whilst he keeps silence toward the reviler, but assures the praying one of admission with him that very day to paradise. A contrast was drawn by the preacher between the two classes, the rejectors and the acceptors of Jesus, in their spirit and in their daily lives. I saw myself, as I had been all my life, depicted in the one, and as I ought to have been in the other. I saw that I owed my being and every good thing I ever had to God, and yet had never in my heart so much as thanked him. And I saw that he had loved me with a love infinitely more tender, deep, and true, than ever was felt by any father for his son, and yet I had never really loved him a particle. And on the other side I saw that I ought to have loved him

with all my heart and acknowledged him in all my ways. Then came the question of all questions for decision, *Shall I now give my heart and hand to Jesus?* And immediately a whole troop of *ifs* came before me in slow and appalling procession. If I do, and yet fail of the joyful experience I have been seeking, what then? Then a gloomy life and a hard one. If I do, and then afterward fall back, then what? Then the reproach of fickleness and back-sliding. If I do, and take my stand before the world, then what? Then my gay young friends will turn from me, and I shall lose them all. If I do, and carry Christian principle through all my business, and give up the selfish maxims by which merchants grow rich, what then? Then I shall grow poor, and see others winning the crown and wearing it.

To these and all other *ifs* there came promptly face to face as many *if nots*, outweighing them every one. But the one great fact, outweighing all besides, was this,—that to *love and serve God was right*, and *not to do it, wrong*. And on this ground at last my mind was made up, my decision taken, my heart given, my life devoted; and then I was at rest.

THE LIGHT APPEARS.

These internal questions settled, my thoughts were liberated to look abroad out away from myself; then, what did I see? The first thing was the picture of the text, and the chief figure in that

was that of Jesus suffering death with sinners for sinners. The indescribable loveliness of His Spirit beamed upon me from every line of His features, every word of His mouth, and every drop of His blood. Oh, what divine compassion in Him to come down from the glories He had with His Father before the world was, and take our nature, and lay down His life for us to save us from eternal death and give us life eternal! Oh, what forbearance of meekness to receive the insults and scoffs, the spitting and blows, the mockery and cruelty of His enemies, and not command upon them avenging destruction, but in the last moments to pray "Father forgive them for they know not what they do"! Oh, how tender and timely, in the eleventh hour, as both He and the malefactor by His side were about to pass out of the world, to listen to the appeal of the condemned one, whose whole life had been wasted in crime against God and man, and instantly accept his repentance, and give him assurance of a home in heaven that very day! This wonderful picture, reproduced on my heart with a harmony of colouring and brightness of delineation which no human pencil can ever equal upon canvas, filled me with a bliss which I can no more express in words than I can, upon paper, reproduce the picture.

All this while it never for a moment occurred to me to think of myself at all : whether I was converted or unconverted, saved or unsaved, was a question which, for the time, did not enter my

thoughts. My bliss was wholly in Jesus, not in myself, and in Jesus it was full. It was first love,—first and passionate love, and as such stands alone in memory; though, since then, I have learned to love him more deeply and more steadily, because I have been shown from time to time more of the length and breadth, and depth and height, of his own love, which passes knowledge, and so have been increasingly filled with the fulness of God.

MY BURTHEN ROLLED OFF.

When, at the close of the service, the assembly rose, and I essayed to rise at the same time, instead of getting upon my feet and lifting myself up, as I had been doing for days, as if a hundred pound pack was pressing me down, to my astonishment I rose with an elasticity such as I never felt before, and stood up, feeling as light as a feather. (I give the literal facts.) And then the thought first flashed upon me that the burden of my cry had been heard and answered. Really, said I to myself, I am converted. This thought gave me new joy, and joy of another kind; yet nothing like so deep and full of peace as that which came from seeing Christ as he stands revealed in the Bible, and as God had revealed him in my heart.

The hymn sung in closing was another joy which it is quite impossible to convey in words. Some day, not far away, I hope to hear the new song, in the new Jerusalem, sung by rapturous spirits; but

shall I ever hear anything sweeter than the melody of that song on that night of my betrothal? The shepherds of the plain were entranced by the bright vision of angels and the blissful announcement of the birth of Jesus, and by the choral song of glory and peace sung by the heavenly host; but if they were more filled than I with the peace and glory bodied in the melody, they were filled more than full.

After the meeting I found that not only had my eyes been opened, but my tongue, which for days had been tied, was now loosed, for I wanted to talk of these things all the time, and tell everybody; and that night my sleep was as sweet as that of a child.

MY HEAVENLY FATHER REVEALED TO MY SOUL.

The next morning I rose from my bed, and as I rose, though I did not feel oppressed with the terrible burden of the previous days, I missed the sense of that wonderful buoyancy which so delighted me the evening before. And instantly the thought rose up, that, after all, perhaps, the vision and the bliss, like the buoyancy, were only like a passing dream, and that, there was no permanent and radical change in me such as I had supposed. This was sad enough, and I went about for an hour or so with, to say the least of it, no very pleasant reflections about the matter, my mind fixed the while steadily on myself. As soon, however, as I had finished the necessary morning's preparations for the day's business, I put

on my hat and started for a stroll, more for the purpose of avoiding others than of gaining any special benefit for myself. My way was across a bridge which spanned a shallow crystal stream running over a pebbly bed. On the bridge, about the middle, I stopped to look down over the side into the water at the fish and pebbles. In a moment the wonderful and beautiful philosophy of the water came up in thought—how by its less solidity than the earth, and greater gravity than the air, it ran along its bed downward toward the ocean, and on its way at every step afforded joy and gladness to man, not only directly, but through the fishes swimming in it, and the animals and birds, and trees and flowers, fruits and grains, which would not, could not, live without it. And how it becomes, in rivers, and lakes, and oceans, a highway of trade and commerce for the human family. And how then, through the laws of evaporation, it is taken up in invisible vapour, and carried by air currents over plains, hills, and valleys, and to the very tops of the highest mountain-peaks. And how, as it goes, it is distilled by the laws of condensation into dews and showers, to water all the world with fertility and beauty, and fill the pools, fountains, rills, and streamlets, to keep the rivers and the ocean full;—all, all for man's sustenance and comfort. *And God meant it to be so—made it for this very purpose.*

This thought carried me out of myself again, up into the fatherhood of God, and again filled me full

of bliss. From that bridge I went bounding, in spirit, onward into the wood beyond; and every tree, and shrub, and flower, and spire of grass,—every insect, bird, squirrel, and horse or cow, sheep or pig, that met my eye, seemed joyous in the goodness of God, who made and sustained them. The love of God displayed in them all, by their structure and by the wonderful provision for their life and happiness, seemed so exquisitely tender and delicate, as well as deep and rich, that I cannot describe it. The very spider, with his dewy web under my feet, and his wonderful economy and instincts, seemed, as the work and care of God, too sacred to be crushed by a careless tread. And all nature seemed to me to be sending up its silent morning anthem of praise, and its invisible cloud of incense, to the God and Father of all, and my God and Father.

Thenceforward my days were like those of spring. If clouds arose, the sunshine soon came again with its cheer; if tears distilled, the heart was all the fresher for them; if storms arose, then lightning and thunder purified the air, and they were followed by the seal of the covenant—the bow in the cloud. So day unto day uttered its speech, and so also night unto night showed the handiwork of God.

I remember well one night in particular. My day's work done, I started out to attend one of our precious meetings. The sky was clear, and the stars were bright; yet there was nothing in that particular

night itself in the aspect of the heavens to create astonishment or delight. If the aurora borealis, as sometimes seen in our northern hemisphere, had been playing, dancing, filling all the heavens with its flashing light; or if a meteoric shower of so-called shooting stars had been in process,—then there would have been in the night itself something to set one agaze with wonder. But it was not so; it was a clear, quiet, starlight night—nothing more. Yet, as alone—though never less alone—walking along the road, I lifted up my eyes, thoughts unutterably sublime, and feelings inexpressibly sweet, came upon me. As the father of the faithful was led forth, and bidden to look up and count the stars, so I, one of the last and least of the children of faith, tried to measure the universe of God, and number His countless worlds, and was lost in the majesty of the great King, and the glory of His dominions. And as Abraham received from God the peculiar covenant of his great place in the kingdom as the father of many nations—and of the Messiah, in whom all nations would be blessed—so I also received in my heart of hearts the seal of God's peculiar covenant for me, that I should have somewhere in His boundless kingdom the very best place in it for me—the place the loving hand of Jesus had prepared for me.

“So dawned in my soul the morning of life eternal, so rose upon me the Sun of Righteousness; to whom with Thee the Father, and the Holy Comforter, be glory through its endless day. Amen, and amen.”

CHAPTER IV.

THE TEST.

THESE examples of the original perversion on the one hand, and of the sceptic's conversion on the other, present clearly to us the opposite gates of death and life. It seems fitting now, before passing on to view the growth, the source, the means, the nature, and so forth, of the new life, that we should glance at the test by which it is to be assuredly distinguished. This is the more imperative, because of the many counterfeits abroad. The arch beguiler is as adroit to-day as in the hour when he deceived our first parents in the garden, and is always where he is least expected, busy with good people and sacred things. His appearances amongst the sons of God when they came before the Lord, as related in the Book of Job, were not as extraordinary as we might think: they were according to his custom: and his audacious efforts with the Son of God, and ready use of the sacred word, strange as they seem to us, were in keeping with his general character and course. Show him a perfect man like the patriarch, upright in all his ways, and he will tell you that he is so in seeming only, and he can prove it if you will let

him. Show him the Son of God, and he will try his hand on even Him. Show him the way of life, and he will show you another just as good, if not a good deal better. Defeat him in any one encounter, and he bides his time to make another. If he cannot induce the Son of God to use his power of miracles to make bread out of stones for Himself to eat, instead of holding it sacred to multiply bread and fishes for others, he will try to induce Him to make a useless display of it, by casting Himself headlong from a pinnacle of the temple, to prove that he can save Himself, instead of holding it in reserve to aid in saving others; and failing in this, he will try to induce Him, instead of making a sacrifice of Himself in life-long laborious poverty and an ignominious death at last, for the establishment of His sway over the men and kingdoms of this world, to take a shorter course, fall down and worship him, accept his principles and use his own boundless abilities in the usual, the sure channels of success,—the tongue, the pen, the sword,—for his own aggrandisement; not die for others, but make others die for him,—not live to save others, but make others live to minister to his ambition; and so gain, as he surely would, all the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them. Anything to sway Him from the grand principle of self-devotion to the glory of His Father and the salvation of the world, over to a selfish devotion of Himself and all things to Himself. But, thanks be to God, though Satan did overcome the first

Adam, the second overcame him, and came off conquerer.

This, however, is his habit; his nature is to thrust himself into all sacred affairs, and either divert men from the right to the wrong, or pervert the right to a wrong use.

No sooner had the Lord, after the perversion of our first parents from Him, laid the foundation for their conversion and that of their posterity to Him again, by the promise of a Saviour, the seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head, than the great deceiver had his plans for perverting the new economy as he had the old. Presently we shall see how he did it in the case of Cain the first-born, but the greater instances are later ones. It is a curious fact that idolatry, as founded originally in Babylon, from whence it spread out over the world, was a perversion of the true and prevalent faith in the promised Redeemer, by a false application of it to Nimrod.* Having achieved great fame and power as a mighty hunter in destroying, by his own prowess and by a trained army of hunters under him, the myriads of wild beasts infesting the Orient; and as a mighty builder also by the cities and temples he erected, Nimrod secured the worship of himself as the seed of the woman, and was put to death for it by sentence of a council over which his grandfather Shem presided. And then Semiramis, his widowed queen, kept up this worship, but secretly, for fear of

* "The Two Babylons," 1 vol. 8vo.

the people, in the celebration of the sacred mysteries, and introduced the worship of herself with her husband, as his virgin mother, and they two were the original objects of hero-worship, the first male and female god and goddess, whence have sprung the whole progeny innumerable: thirty thousand at one time acknowledged in Athens alone!

And when in the fulness of time Christ himself came in the flesh, born of a virgin, wrought his wonderful works, taught his heavenly doctrines, died to atone for sin, rose again, and ascended into heaven, the veritable seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head,—what should the old enemy do but pervert this blessed gospel of the Son of God to his own purposes as a grand earthly pageant, subservient to human power and glory, and bring about a complete amalgamation between it and the old idolatry!*

No wonder that Luther, seeing this old enemy in the dark, should throw his inkstand at his head, or that Paul, meeting his emissary, Elymas the sorcerer, in the isle of Cyprus, and being withstood by him in his Satanic cunning, should exclaim, "O thou enemy of all righteousness, full of subtlety and all mischief, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?"

Not one jot of his cunning or activity has been abated; he is as busy now as ever, and as audacious. Circles Protestant he enters as well as Catholic, and

* "The Two Babylons."

Evangelical as well as Broad Church. If he cannot make a Hindoo of a man, he can perhaps make him a papist, or a formalist, or a legalist, or something else besides a true, free, happy believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the cunning schemes of Satan is that of multiplying specious ways to offer every man something to suit his own peculiar taste, and thus mislead as many as he can ; and then by the very multiplicity of ways presented, to stop as many more as possible from taking the right one, by making it seem impossible for them to find it amongst the multitude,—as in a forest park one is sometimes lost in the multitude of paths. Who knows which is right? How can I tell whether one man is in the right way, or another? or whether there is any right way at all? These are the questions asked by very many.

Happily for us, God has not left us without a test by which every one, if he is right, may know it. Terrible for us would it be if this were not so. Here we are in a world of mingled truth and falsehood, born into it blind to things eternal; going forward daily toward the world to come, surrounded by divergent ways, all seeming right, yet only one really so; many leading to the Dives side of the eternal gulph of separation, yet all professing to lead to Abraham's bosom. Oh, how terrible it would be if God had left us without the test by which each for himself may know whether he is or is not right with God!

What that test is, we shall see more clearly from the examples which God has spread before us in his Word; and certainly we shall accept it with more implicit trust and satisfaction than if presented in any other way.

The world was not long without an example of the test applied, and we cannot do better than to trace that first of all.

CAIN AND ABEL.

Cain was wrong, and Abel right; but Cain did not believe it, though Abel did. How they came so, we may conjecture, but can never know with certainty until we hear it in the world to come.

Probably Cain received impressions from his mother in his infancy, which helped his growth in pride and vanity, and ended in the self-conceit and arrogance, imperiousness and hardness, which rejected every influence from God to soften and subdue him into penitence, faith, and love; whilst Abel's early nurture was, though in the same family, yet of another school entirely. We know it often is so. And we know that the attitude of the mother's heart was very different toward the two at their birth, and before and after it. She had great expectations from her first-born, but not from her second. She believed the first to be the promised seed—the great deliverer of her race from the chains of sin and Satan into which she had plunged herself and them; for when she brought him forth she called him by the memo-

rial name, Gotten, or Cain—because, said she, “I have gotten the man from the Lord:” whilst at the birth of the second she expressed her meagre hopes of him in the name Vanity, Hebel, Abel. How profoundly Eve was moved herself by this great thought about her first-born it would be hard for us to realise. Hannah’s soul was stirred to its very depths, in reference to her first-born, by thoughts far less grand and comprehensive; and Mary’s song of exultation bears witness to the fulness of her soul in view of the assurance that her first-born would be the very promised one whom Eve supposed she held in her embrace in Cain. The influence of these great expectations in Eve’s heart may have passed over to her son, unconsciously to herself, even before his birth, and during early childhood, and ripened into those feelings concerning himself which ensured his destruction. However that may be, he was wrong, and Abel right. God told him so when He reasoned with him to try and save him before the fatal fratricide,—If thou doest well, even now, thou shalt be accepted. As if He had said: Thy brother hath done right; he hath repented and been converted, and become as a little child; he hath put his trust in me, and given himself up to my service; he accepts my promise of redemption, and believes it; he is therefore right. Thou art wrong. Thou hast a proud heart; thou hast been arrogant and boastful, and despised thy brother, and hast not repented of thy sins, and turned to me, and trusted in me and in my

promise for pardon and redemption, but hast been self-righteous and self-confident altogether. Yet, even now, if thou wilt turn and do well, as thy brother hast, thou shalt yet be accepted, and then this alienation between thee and him shall cease; his desire as the younger shall be unto thee, and thou as the elder shalt rule over him.

That Cain had disappointed the high hopes of his mother, and that she had turned from him to Abel before the fratricide, as the promised seed, seems certain; because, when afterward Seth was born, she gave him his name signifying Put, "because," said she, "the Lord hath put me another seed in place of Abel"—not in place of Cain, but of Abel, whom Cain slew.

It is quite possible—nay, even highly probable—that Abel, like his mother, rested firmly in the promise of a Redeemer, and simply waited in that faith for God to make it plain who that Redeemer was; that is, his faith rested in Jehovah. Whilst Cain, without any proof at all except the early expectations of his mother, had applied the promise to himself, and arrogated for himself the honours of the Messiahship. Nimrod did so fifteen centuries later; why may not Cain have done so then?

Whatever the form it assumed, self was uppermost in his heart; whilst in the heart of Abel self was put down, dethroned, and God reigned there supreme.

And so they came at the appointed time to the appointed place with their offerings. Some have supposed that Abel's offering was of an acceptable

kind because he brought the firstlings of his flock, and the fat thereof—*blood offerings*, suitable for atonement; and that Cain's was not acceptable because he brought fruits of the ground, appropriate for a thank-offering. It may be so, and if so, the offering of Cain was what it was because he was what he was—a proud man, with a heart like the Pharisee, full of self-sufficiency and boasting; and that of Abel was a sin-offering, because he felt himself a sinner, like the poor publican, and his sacrifice said as plainly as words could speak, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

And so they laid their offerings upon God's altar; and then came the test. What was it? God's acceptance manifested. How? It is not essential. There are more ways than one in which God has manifested His acceptance of the right. Which way it was in this instance we are not told: the record is simply that to Abel and his offering God had respect, but to Cain and his offering He had not respect.

And so Cain's countenance fell, whilst Abel's heart must have been filled with inexpressible delight.

The answer, however given, was decisive and unmistakable. It left no room for doubt. It may have been by fire from the sacred presence between the cherubim coming forth and kindling upon the offerings of Abel, whilst those of Cain were left unconsumed; as at Carmel, in the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal, fire fell from heaven upon Elijah's sacrifice and consumed it, with the very

stones of the altar and the water in the trench round about, whilst that of the prophets of Baal remained untouched, as a silent witness against them. But whether so or not, the test was thorough, the proof complete. God does not do things by halves ; and Abel knew that he was accepted and beloved, whilst Cain knew that he was rejected, and this filled him with the madness of a wounded spirit. The bad fires of hatred and vengeance were kindled in his heart, even as they were kindled in the hearts of Stephen's persecutors by the same fires which in Stephen's heart kindled the love and zeal from God that filled his soul ; and it ended in making Cain at last a wretched fratricide, branded with his brother's blood, and an outcast from his father's house ; and in sending Abel home to heaven much the same as Stephen went, whilst beholding its glories waiting to receive him.

Another recorded instance of this test applied is that of

THE PENTECOSTAL SCENES.

The disciples of Jesus were waiting at Jerusalem, in pursuance of the command of their and our ascended Saviour, to receive the promised endowment of power from the Father in testimony of their faith, and to fit them for the work. Assembled at the appointed hour, with one heart, in that upper chamber, amidst a city filled with enemies of their Master and His cause, Abel-like, in all humility and sincerity,

they brought their offerings of united prayer before the Lord ; when suddenly there fell upon them the promised Holy Comforter, and filled them with His hallowed fire of faith and love, light and joy, accompanying His presence with the outward demonstrations of a rushing sound as of a mighty wind, and lambent light crowning all their heads ; whilst, in all the city round about, nothing of the kind occurred in any other room or with any other people.

Then when they went into the temple, and there talked of these wonderful things, and were confronted by their opposers amidst thousands drawn together by the report spread abroad of what was going on and were accused of being filled with new wine, they made their defence. And whilst Peter was yet speaking, the same power from God came down, and thousands were convinced of all, gave themselves up to the faith of Christ, found acceptance, and received the answering test or testimony that they, like Abel and Elijah, and the hundred and twenty in the upper room, were right in the sight of God ; whilst the persecutors of the Lord Jesus, and all who had rejected Him, were wrong.

The true test is God's testimony. This in our times is the witness of the Spirit in our hearts, assuring us that God is our Father. Every one ought to have it ; no one ought to rest without it. God has promised to give it to every one who believes—no to every one who half believes, but who actually trusts in Jesus with all his soul, and yields himself

entirely up to Him to do all His will. The promise is unequivocal, and repeated very often in many forms, and has been fulfilled in every instance of true faith from the time of Abel until this hour.

Therefore, if any one is without the witness of the Spirit in himself, dispelling doubt and darkness, and giving the light of life, let such an one beware! Remember that the negative assurance to Cain of his being wrong was simply that he obtained no testimony that he was right; so with the prophets of Baal; so with the men of Jerusalem who believed not; their condemnation was not made manifest by any positive sign from heaven in or upon themselves, but simply by being let alone, and left as they were. Not to have the evidence of acceptance with them was to have the evidence of rejection; so now, not to be divinely assured of life is evidence of death,—not to know that one is saved is presumptively to know that he is lost.

Now, before we pass to our next topic, let us note two very important things concerning this.

First, the test is God's testimony in our hearts. It is God's, not ours. He prescribes, not we. It is not ours to say when or how it shall be; that we must leave to Him. And it is in our hearts: not some sign in the heavens above or earth beneath; not a sign of any kind; but simply the sweet assurance of God's great and tender love, the spirit of children who see and know that God is their Father.

And second, The way to secure this testimony is

to seek God himself, and trust in Christ. They who seek signs from Him fail to get them. Some have even had reason dethroned by seeking signs, and this is not perhaps an unfrequent thing for persons inclined to look and long for some sign in the heavens, some handwriting on the wall, or some other not altogether preposterous thing from God, as a token to them of their salvation.

Seek God, not signs. Trust in Him, and He will not leave you without His Spirit in your hearts.

CHAPTER V.

ADVANCEMENT.

"From glory to glory." —2 Cor. iii. 18.

GROWTH is the law of life. The new life may indeed sleep in the germ, like the wheat kernel in the mummy-case, for many days, without germinating. Yet if it has the warming rays of the Sun of Righteousness, and the refreshing dews and showers of God's gracious Spirit, nothing can prevent its coming forth into early vigorous leaf and foliage.

THE MOUNTAINEER.

A boy, converted at the bedside of an elder brother who, in his dying hour, sealed by his triumphant faith the testimony of years of faithful living, soon went out from home to the far-off frontier, beyond all Christian companionship and privilege; and then away still farther into the great mountain chains separating the Pacific and Atlantic regions.

At first he so loved the Saviour that he longed for the privilege of devoting himself to Christ as a minister, and was hindered from it only because he could see no way of gaining the necessary education. His

life, however, amongst frontiersmen first, and then as a hunter and trapper in the mountains, shut in his love and zeal as the husk shuts in the kernel, and for long years there was no growth whatever made manifest to himself or to those around. At last he abandoned hunting and trapping, and became a *ranchero* first, and then a merchant in the sunny region of Southern California. There, after a time, the genial influence of a Christian friend, in whom he took a generous interest, seemed slowly to warm into action the germ so long asleep, and carry him back in thought again to the scene at his brother's bedside and the happy succeeding days. Soon he opened his heart to his friend, told him the story of his conversion, and became like one in whom the new life is in the early spring-time of its unfolding.

It is to be feared that very many fall into an early sleep, and are awakened to life and growth only after many days. Not many indeed by frontier and mountaineer associations; but are there not influences in the city and in society—aye even in the Church—which serve like the husk to wrap up the germ of life in the heart, and put it sound asleep by keeping out the germinating force of divine light, and heat, and dew, and shower?

The new life may, like vegetation in the Arctic regions or in barren soil, become chilled or starved, and checked or dwarfed; or it may be compelled to grow by fits and starts, because of alternate heat and cold.

In America the extremes of climate seem in some sort to have passed over into Christian husbandry. Long winters, during which life seems frozen up and dormant, are followed by the heat of summer, when growth is hotbed like. Intervals of icy coldness, when all the Christian graces are snow-bound at home, and all abroad is cheerless and chill, are followed by the floods of spring-time, when all the fountains overflow and every stream is full. Shops and offices close up, and the sun and moon of worldly interest stand still to see the salvation of our God. These extremes, with the autumnal harvests, when the fruits are garnered in the churches, make up mainly the circle of our seasons and the measure of our progress.

In England, perhaps, growth, like the seasons, may be less extreme and fitful, seldom so rapid as in an American revival, or so slow as in an American declension.

Scotland and Ireland may stand somewhere between the two.

The truth is, that in each and all there is ample room for improvement; and thanks be to God there is ample power to make it. There is in Christ a power to equalise them all by lifting each up to a higher, fuller life. This power is within hailing distance of every one. Its application must be personal to become general. Every one for himself must avail himself of it, and so become himself a power in aid of the national elevation.

There are none so far advanced as to be above and

beyond the general law of growth. In the vegetable and animal kingdoms each plant and creature has its limit of development. Not so in the spiritual kingdom, where growth is boundless as eternity and as the infinitude of God, the knowledge of whom is its food. Indeed, those who have risen highest are in the best position to advance still farther. Amongst the giants of the kingdom in the patriarchal age there is one whose example in this respect seems to have been greatly overlooked, whilst in other particulars its influence has been without a parallel.

THE PATRIARCH JOB.

The patience of Job is proverbial, and the wonderful prosperity by which his patient faith was crowned at last is always spoken of; but the great advancement in spiritual life achieved in the final deliverance from his troubles, prepared for by them, is scarcely ever mentioned. And yet the wealth of faith and love and joy and peace gathered into the treasury of his heart, and permanently invested in the compound-interest-bearing securities of the kingdom, must have infinitely surpassed the increase of flocks and herds, houses and lands, servants and children, gold and silver, given him of God.

Job was a good man, a glorious man, at the time of his introduction to us in the history of his career. Not many men have ever lived of whom it could be said by the searching pen of inspiration they are perfect, upright, fearing God, and eschewing evil; not

many surely who could be classed with Noah and Daniel, as Job was by the Lord himself in speaking of the men mightiest of all in every age in prayer. Not many to whom God would point as examples to stop the mouth of the arch accuser of the brethren, and say, as He did of him, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?" Nor many whom God would permit to be put to such fearful tests of his integrity, in order to show to all the world, through all time, as he did by his example, the power of Christian principle, to stand all vicissitudes, and to triumph in the most fearful trials.

Yes, Job was indeed one of the noblest and best of the sons of God on earth, before his great advancement at the outcome of his trials, or he never could have sustained them as he did. In some respects the tests to which he was subjected were greater than any martyrdom. When the Christians of persecuting Judæa, like Stephen, were tried before councils, and stoned to death, they knew the source of all their sufferings, and understood that enemies were doing it, and could look up to God, and behold the heavens open, with God enthroned in mercy, and Jesus at His right hand; and death to them was rather a translation than a martyrdom, an apotheosis more than a descent into a valley and shadow of darkness. And the flames and stake, and rack, dungeon, and cross, in later days, were terrible indeed; and yet the suf-

ferers by all these knew that whilst man was against them, God was for them, and that death would end in life. To the patriarch, on the other hand, the most trying thing of all was, that God seemed to be against him. Stroke after stroke fell upon him, like the news from the battle-field upon Eli, until it seems a wonder that, Eli-like, he did not fall under them and die. In the moment of his highest prosperity and honour, on the day when his beloved children were feasting in the house of the eldest born, a messenger was announced with tidings that the Sabeans had robbed him of all his working animals at their ploughs, and killed all his working men—all save the one escaped to bring the tidings. While this blow was fresh and full in force, another herald of evil came with the news that the fire of God had fallen from heaven, and burned up all his sheep and all his shepherds, except the one who lived to come and tell him. And before the power of this calamity was mitigated in the least, another came with the still more terrible intelligence that a whirlwind from the wilderness had struck the house where his children were feasting, and dashed it down upon them, and they were dead.

Now, in all this the one thing most perplexing to the patriarch was, that it was all so unaccountable. Had he known that Satan was doing his utmost in these things to try him, and prove him to be no true servant of God, and so to prove that the servants of God, after all, are no better in the final

analysis of principles than those who neither fear God nor regard man, and that the Sabeans, the fire, and the winds were permissively doing Satan's bidding, only that in the end the gold of divine truth in him might be sure to shine all the more for being in the crucible, his trials would have been light in comparison, heavy as they were; and he might even have borne up to rejoice in view of the glory that should be revealed to the world by him. But no, it was to him the providence of God, without a thought of Satan as the agent of it, or an inkling of the triumph over him to be gained in it. And yet how sublime his bearing! He mourned, indeed, but in all the darkness accepted his poverty and bereavement, and said, "Blessed be the name of the Lord." Then, when again the enemy gained permission, and returned, in all his malignant cunning, veiled in invisibility, to the attack, and struck him through and through with the most painful and loathsome disease, to the disgust even of his wife, and when his wife bade him curse God and die, and when his three royal friends came, and, to justify the Lord, urged what he knew to be utterly false, that he had been guilty of some secret and awful criminality, for which he was receiving punishment, then the trial was at its very height. How could mortal man suffer more! How could the integrity of faith and fealty to God be more severely tested!

Yet even then, though tried to the very utmost, until death would have been welcomed as a relief,

with his disease upon him, his wife and friends against him, and resting under the horrible suspicion of dark and guilty sins, with God presumptively angry with him for he knew not what, he still clung to the integrity of truth. He repelled with scorn and scorching irony the implications of his friends, and justified himself; but he did not accuse the Lord, nor sin against Him with his lips, but vied with his friends, and surpassed them too, in exalting God's wisdom, power, and goodness.

And finally, when Satan had done his worst, and had no more that he could do, and gave up the contest, the Lord brought his integrity to light, and honoured him in the presence of his friends, and of all the world through all time.

He was a glorious man. Yet even he, in the outcome of his trials, made a wonderful advance.

The first great effect of all the losses, sufferings, and accusations brought upon the patriarch was to create an inexpressible desire to know more of God. He hungered and thirsted to have the ways of the Lord unfolded to him. His ignorance and darkness were oppressive. He knew himself to be free from the iniquity imputed to him as the cause of God's special judgments against him, and yet here he was under the wrath of God, to all appearance. Why was it? What could it mean? And his cry was, Oh, that I could see him! Oh, that there was a day-man, who might communicate freely between us! I go forward, but he is not there; and backward,

but cannot find him. His invisibility baffles every effort. Oh, that He would manifest Himself to me, that I might know Him and reason with Him, and tell Him all my soul, and hear Him in return !

This was the patriarch's state of mind when God came to him in the whirlwind, the rolling, involving cloud ; it may be like that in which he afterward came to Israel to lead them out of Egypt and through the wilderness. He came to him to lead him out of his darkness felt, like that of Egypt, and out of his oppression, which made him groan as Israel groaned under burdens too great to be borne.

Ah, what a scene was that to him ! What an unfolding was there to his soul of his own nothingness and ignorance, as seen in the light of God's wisdom, power, and glory ! In a single moment, as it were, he was carried back, upon the wings of God's own summons, to the scene of creation, to see how God laid the foundations of the world, and then up amongst the starry worlds, to witness their majesty, and countless number, and perfect harmony, and then out into the mountains, and down into the seas, to behold the variety of God's creatures and the perfection of his arrangements for them, in times and seasons, instincts and provisions ; and by the time he had completed the circuit his discoveries overwhelmed him. He had heard of God before, but now he saw him in his works, and the sight filled

him with glowing, glorious apprehensions of His majesty and love, such as he had never conceived before. Noble as he really was, and was shown to be by the ordeal through which he had passed, he was filled with self-abhorrence, and completely crucified to self-conceit and self-confidence.

Now, at last, the patriarch had reached a new and true position for great and rapid growth, as well as for full and blissful prosperity and enjoyment, in the conscious knowledge of God's favour and loving kindness. He was, to use the apostle's words, dead to self and alive to God. He was crucified to all self-righteousness and strength, but yet lived, and lived a new life in the Saviour. Now, he was prepared to behold the Lord as in a glass, and he changed from glory to glory into his image; and now he was prepared to live every day and all the time in the sunlight of his presence, and in the joy of his salvation.

Henceforth his progress was no longer in the dark but in the light. He walked with God, who is the Father of lights, and in whom there is no darkness at all. And God turned the tide of all his affairs so that, whilst he was laying up countless treasure in heaven, he was also receiving here on earth both in earthly friendships and possessions, and in heavenly peace, many-fold more than he had ever before possessed.

Herein is the grand power: first, for personal growth and progress, and then for lifting up th

general standard of every nation to both fulness and constancy. And this glorious power is not far off from every one, but nigh at hand. It has only to be sought as Job sought it, with fervent aspiration and effectual prayer, and it will be found.

CHAPTER VI.


OCCASIONS.

THE sufferings of the patriarch Job were the occasion of his advancement, not the cause of it. God was the cause. And in the rich results we have a vivid illustration of the principle, in its workings this side of the grave, concerning the sufferings of God's dear children, so impressively expressed by the apostle Paul concerning its results in the world to come, saying, "I reckon that these light afflictions, which are but for a season, shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

The afflictions of Job were heavy enough—heavy as mortal man could bear, and live; yet, even so, they were short in comparison with the years of joy into which he issued from them. And heavy as they were, they were light in the scales over against the joys which followed them. Who can conceive, much less express, the inconceivable, inexpressible delights of that one glad surprise! A whole lifetime of happiness was compressed in that one hour. And that was the beginning of years of heaven on earth in his soul.

God makes use of every sort of occasion to pro-

mote advancement in those he loves. All things he works together, first to call, then to justify, then to sanctify, then to glorify them. Often he uses losses and bereavements, sickness, and death itself, to drive his people to seek him, and forsake every false hope and way. Once at least, as we are told by the distinguished man himself, he pressed a millionaire, by the very weight of his wealth, to seek him earnestly and successfully, that he might have a heart to distribute all his princely income to the poor, and for the diffusion of the glad tidings. And once he pressed a very youthful king, by reason of his newly-conferred throne and sceptre, that he might be able to go out and come in with righteousness and discretion as supreme judge of his great people, to seek wisdom from God with all his heart, and choose it in preference to wealth, honour, or length of days, and to find it. Oh, that such instances may be multiplied until wealth and power shall be gained and used as God intended they should be, and means that yet they shall be! Sometimes the festive and joyful occasion of the entrance upon matrimonial life, with its new and happy auspices and promises, is lovingly and successfully urged by the heavenly breath within as the time for a new commencement and consecration. And often the growing solicitude of parents for their own beloved children presses them to seek and find God more fully as a covenant God to them and theirs. Times of great refreshing, and examples of great and happy progress, are still more frequently, perhaps,



used as God's occasions for pushing forward his chosen ones.

The entrance upon some new and important work like that of missions, or a new line of life like that of the sacred ministry, becomes with many the occasion of seeking a new and better line of departure and a higher power of usefulness. Impelled by the voice within and the providence without, these things are undertaken, and changes made, not from preference so much as from a necessity laid upon us, and a "woe is me" impending, if rebellious. We assent, with what grace God knows—not better, it is to be feared, sometimes, than that of the prophet sent to Nineveh. And then comes a sense of personal unfitness and urgent need of fresh and full endowment from on high. And happy the man who, Jonah-like, at last is set ablaze, and made bold to face fearlessly the world, even though it be the courtly royal world of fashion, wealth, and power; and the zeal to proclaim the Word of God, even though it must, if it prevail, bring a king and people down into the dust, or if it fail, will surely cost its herald the loss of his head.

More than once, or twice, or thrice, the annals of the kingdom show that the king has sent forth his citizens to strange lands, leaving all behind them, both as a means to try their fealty to him, and to bind them in closer, stronger bonds. Abraham seems to have been tossed about from place to place, back and forth, so frequently as to keep

him from striking root in any earthly soil, and make him, like the air plants, live upon the breath of heaven. And every new journey was made the occasion of the renewal and enlargement of the covenant with him, and of new and glorious manifestations of God to him—things which always mean new accessions to the tide of spiritual life.


Occasionally some singular trial of faith and fealty comes, too, like that of the command of God to his servant, to go and offer up the dearest idol, the best beloved, the only son; then, when the sacrifice is made—really made in heart, whether consummated in the act or not—then comes a flood of light, and love, and joy in God from God, as only such a perfect self-sacrifice can prepare the way for.

Any contest or peril on land or sea, or anything which sends a man out of himself to God as the only trustworthy source of help, and gives him a positive reliance upon the Lord, and brings him deliverance, may prove—nay, must prove—the occasion of an increase of faith, and joy, and love. The encounters of the shepherd-son of Jesse with the bear and lion, sent him to God for deliverance, and anchored his soul upon God in grateful, loving confidence, without which he could never have cheered himself on to overcome the sneers of his brothers and the doubts of the king, to say nothing of his own human heart, so as to undertake the heroic and famous combat with the giant champion of Philistia. Great difficulties to be overcome sometimes, send us

to God for great endowments to overcome them, and then both the victor's crown and the victor's new-gained power are ours for ever.

Now, it is a curious fact, and one that, if observed and carried with us, will add greatly to our pleasure as well as profit in our Bible studies, that in many cases the occasions used for the increase of spiritual life, are such as to absorb attention in these occasions themselves, and by their very vividness and prominence eclipse the advance achieved, and hide it out of sight. This was so, in the case of Job's troubles and deliverance not only, but in most of those referred to. This fact, that underneath the outward shell of personal, social, or political incident there may be found, in many an event in the life of many a child of God, a spiritual life, expanding, bursting, budding, growing toward the fulness of power and joy,—this fact, if borne in mind, cannot fail to add a new vein of golden truth to God's precious word for us from the beginning to the end.

Nevertheless, be it ever remembered that our occasions are those which God presents, not those we seek or make ourselves. It is ours to seek the Lord, and when he presents a test to us, then meet it; but it is not ours to make tests for ourselves. That would be temerity and folly. If Abraham had said to himself, Now I will test myself; I will go and offer up my son to God: and had gone, knife in hand and wood upon his son's back, and built the altar, and laid the wood upon it, and bound his son upon



the wood, and raised his hand to slay him,—all without divine command ;—would God have interposed to prevent the slaughter, and provided for himself a lamb, and then kindled in brighter glow than ever the fire of love and joy in Abraham's heart ? Would he not have condemned him rather, or allowed him to go on to the bitter end in his course of self-will and self-sacrifice, without one ray of light, one beam of love, one drop of joy—but darkness, bitterness, misery, rather, added ? Trials, tests, afflictions, and the like, are God's instruments, not ours, to use : it is ours to meet them when he sends them, and then to overcome is life, and power, and blessing ; whilst it is death and woe to us if they, not we, come off conqueror.

Another side of this matter of occasions deserves in this connexion the most careful thought. It is this :—Occasions are God's, but opportunities are ours. Trials are to be met, not made ; but opportunities of progress are to be seized upon always and everywhere. We may well afford to leave the whole matter of losses, crosses, bereavements, troubles, in the hands of God, and await their coming ; for, alas ! they are sure to come. But we ought not to wait a moment for any occasion whatever to seek our God and gain fresh and full endowments of His truth and grace. There is one example given us—one which we shall have reason to examine more fully by and by in another place—which is worthy of being treasured and emulated by every one ; it is that of a

man who seems never to have missed a single opportunity to advance, but to have seized every chance and used every moment for the purpose. Not that he outran the grace of God, or got before the Captain of his salvation! No, never! Once, indeed, when one work was ended, and he was eager for another, he essayed to go into a certain country, and the "Spirit would not let him;" and then, at a loss what to do, he, with his companions, went down to a seaport, and there a vision taught him where to go. In this he did not outrun his Captain, but essayed to go without effectually consulting Him, and was, therefore, allowed to go amiss until checked, and then, as soon as he did fairly and fully refer the matter to the Higher Power, he received his orders in the vision. It is entirely safe to say that never did he or any other mortal man outstrip the desires and plans for him of our loving God and Saviour—never!

But this one thing he did: from the day his eyes were opened to the light of life, he pressed for the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ. This was his constant attitude, and what was the result? Achievements unparalleled in the annals of the world—achievements, sublime, divine.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SOURCE.

"I am the way, the truth, and the life."—JOHN xiv. 6.

"Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."—COL. iii. 3.

"I am the resurrection and the life."—JOHN xi. 25.

"Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."—1 COR. xii. 27.

GOD in Christ is our life, and therefore our life is hid with Christ in God. Natural life God creates; spiritual life He is. In the old creation God formed man out of the dust, and breathed into him the breath of life, and he became a living soul. In the new creation God enters into the soul himself, and animates it by His own living presence, which is life eternal.

The branches of a tree have life in themselves, but their life is that of the tree, not their own. Cut off, they wither and die. Grafted in, they live and flourish. So with us: in Christ, and Christ in us, we live; out of Christ, we die. Christ in us is our life, for He is the life, and He is ours; He lives in us, and His life is ours, and His life is life eternal.

Our hands, and feet, and the other members of our body, are alive, but the life in them is not their own,

but ours. They have no life of their own; cut them off, and they are dead. We live in them, and therefore they are alive. We are Christ's body, and members in particular; and He dwells in us as we dwell in our bodies and in our members: therefore we have eternal life. It is Christ our life in us who animates our souls with life divine, and if He were withdrawn, we should no longer live.

We build our habitations with our hands, but we fill them with our life only by dwelling in them; so God has created us to be His living temples, but can animate us with His own life only by His abiding presence in our souls.

Human life is conscious. Man has a consciousness all his own,—a human consciousness. Animal life is instinctive only, and however high its instincts, and however difficult it may be to mark the line between animal instinct and human consciousness, the two are different in kind. Eternal life is also a conscious life, distinct in kind from natural human life. Eternal life has for its sphere the consciousness of higher things than the soul by nature grasps and comprehends. Even as the soul of man knoweth the things of man, so the soul in which Christ dwells knows the things of God.

Our Saviour, in His prayer to the Father, in our behalf, said, "This is eternal life, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent." To know, to have acquaintance with, to hold conscious intercourse, to be on

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Our hands, and feet, and the other members of our body, are alive, but the life in them is not their own,

Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, and hold free, full intercourse with them hour after hour, day in and day out, ah! this is sweeter than honey and the honeycomb! With this nothing else can compare. We may have known before all the joys of earth, the lines of childhood, youth, and manhood may have fallen to us in earth's most pleasant places, and we may have drank the cup of human bliss, dipped deep and often into the highest, purest, sweetest fountains in the world; and yet, coming to this heavenly source, we find in Christ a fountain infinitely higher, purer, sweeter than them all.

Another question answered by this fact is, Why each successive step of progress in the life eternal is also a matter of wonder and delight? Because each one is a higher, deeper, fuller unfolding of God to the soul. The life itself is divine,—God in the soul,—and its progress is divine at every step. God is infinite, and has in Himself heights and depths and lengths and breadths of love passing knowledge; and from time to time, as we can bear it, He prepares us, awakens desire, arouses hungering and thirsting which pleads, Moses-like, to behold God's glory; and then He passes by, and unfolds so much of His goodness as we have power to receive, and fills us with joyful amazement.

Still another question is answered by this fact,—How the ancient worthies, before the advent of Christ, came to have life, and have it so abundantly? Our Saviour has told us that He came that we might

have life, and have it more abundantly; and the apostle Paul says of the brilliant cloud of witnesses of the earliest times, that, "These all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Yet when we stand up side by side with such men as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Job, and Daniel, and take our measurement by comparison, we seem like pigmies to ourselves. How happens it?

The truth is, that the difference in our favour, great as it is, is not so great as it may seem to be. They had the living God to live in them, and we have no more. True, He has unfolded more and more, from age to age, Himself, by unfolding more and more His plans of mercy, and working out from step to step the great salvation. True, we have the accumulated revelations of the ages past, from those to Adam in the garden, to those received by John for us in the isle of Patmos. True, we have the sum total of them all in Jesus, the one grand manifestation of God in the flesh. True, we have the great atonement, which was foreshadowed through so many generations in so many ways. But it is not the plan of God, nor the work of God, nor the Word of God, nor the atonement made for us, nor anything else, that is our life. That is God himself, God alone, God in us. The plan of God, wrought out for us, may tell us how He saves; the Word of

God may point us to Him as our Saviour ; the works of God may show us that He is mighty and able to save ; the atonement may show us that there is now nothing in the way of our salvation ; but it is God, and God alone, who saves us.

God is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He was the same when He talked with Adam in the garden as when He walked with His disciples in Palestine ; the same to Abel and to Stephen, to Enoch and to Paul. He was the same when He revealed Himself simply as the Mighty God, the Elohim, as when He unfolded Himself still further as the Lord God, the Jehovah Elohim ; and then the same as when, still later, He unveiled yet more, and stood forth as the Lord God of Israel ; and then the same as when He came at last in the flesh, and bore our sins in His own body on the cross ; and then the same that He will be when He shall come again in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. He is one, and never changes ; and although He has thus unfolded Himself step by step, until He stands so clearly manifested in the sacred Word, yet the question at last is not so much, How clearly He has revealed Himself ? as, How fully we have received Him ? The limit of our attainment in the fulness of life eternal is not the extent of God's manifestations of Himself for us, but of our capacity to comprehend Him. Hence it is that the apostle tells us that for this very cause it was that he bowed himself before God, that we might be *strengthened* with might in the inner man, that Christ

might dwell in us by faith, that being rooted and grounded in love, we might with all saints be able to *comprehend the length and breadth, depth and height*, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God.

Doubtless Abel saw all of God that he had capacity to receive. And Enoch, we know, had such manifestations of God in his soul as led him to walk the thorny path of life with joyous step hand in hand with God, and then mount up at last and soar above the dark valley and shadow of death, as no one save Elijah has done since that day. And Noah knew enough of God to be borne above the flood of unbelief, and scoffs, and jeers, which surged around him, and beat upon him, during all the years of his preparation for the flood. And Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses, Joshua, and the Judges, David, and the prophets, knew enough of God to subdue kingdoms, work righteousness, obtain promises, stop the mouths of lions, quench the violence of fire, escape the edge of the sword: out of weakness be made strong, wax valiant in fight, put to flight the armies of the aliens, receive their dead to life, bear tortures, and refuse deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection; endure mockings, scourgings, bonds, imprisonment, and every form of trial, triumphing in them all.

The truth is, that however much we have in the history of the past more than they had of the unfoldings of God's purposes, and plans, and heart, they

had enough to fill them full to the utmost with the glorious things of God. *And they had God himself in them, to strengthen them with might, and enable them to comprehend Him, and to unfold Himself to them in all His fulness to the full measure of their capacity to receive Him.* And that is just what we have. But then, again, on the other hand, how much more have we to encourage us to seek Him ! how much more to invite our trust in Him ! And the great questions to be answered are—Why is it, with the high vantage ground upon which we stand, we are not more filled with all the fulness of God ? and, How are we to secure this high and heavenly boon ?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MEANS.

"By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."—EPH. ii. 8.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; for by it the elders obtained a good report."
—HEB. xi. 1, 2.

CHRIST and faith, these two words epitomise the plan of salvation,—Christ, our salvation; and faith, our means of its reception,—Christ complete, and we complete in Him. He who has Christ has life, and he who has not Christ has not life. He who trusts in Christ, has Christ; and he who does not trust in Christ, has Him not.

The grace of God is a boundless ocean, of which His Son is the complete embodiment. God's love is not a sea which may be fathomed by the line of human comprehension, or bounded by man's imagination. Like the blue above, its soundings are too deep and its boundaries too broad for the powers of the highest created being. Yet all this universe of love comes to us in the one gift of God, the gift of His Son our Saviour; and if we accept of Him, in Him we have it all.

Christ himself meets every want, and, therefore,

He himself is all we want. He has borne our sins and taken away our condemnation, by His own blood shed in our behalf.

He has fulfilled the law for us—not for Himself but for us. He was above all law,—the source of law, and of authority, and power;—and yet He for us came under the law, and in our nature obeyed it to the letter and in the spirit. And so, whilst by His perfect obedience He magnified the law and made it honourable, He wove in Himself, so to speak for us a spotless robe. So that, accepting Him, putting Him in place of our own tattered selves, we are clothed upon by Him, and stand in Him before God complete and spotless.

Christ has, for us, as well as before us, passed through the dark valley, unbolted and unbarred the gates of death, and so destroyed both its power to hold us and its terrors to alarm us.

He has ascended on high, and entered the uplifted gates of glory, and taken His place upon the throne as King, that we, in the long procession of His ransomed ones, may follow in His train, and sit with Him on His throne.

He has come again to be with us always, even unto the end of the world, to abide in us and we in Him and with himself He brings His Father, and He manifests Himself and His Father to us as not unto the world, and unfolds to us the glorious things of God. He gives us the promise of the Father, the Holy Comforter, who speaks to us, not of Himself

but of our Father and His Son, in our hearts, telling us of the riches of grace in Christ Jesus, and of the loving-kindness and tender mercy of our heavenly Father towards us, thus turning us, heart and soul, away from the world and self, and filling us with joy and peace, light and life in God.

Christ also reigns in heaven for us with plenary power, commanding for His purposes of mercy every force in heaven and earth, physical and vital, and working all things together for good to His chosen, loving ones, that He may purify us unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works, make His truth and grace in us a fountain of life springing up for ever, and present us finally without fault before His Father's throne. All this Jesus has done, is doing, and will do for us, here on earth and there in heaven. Yea, infinitely more is He to us than we have power now to know or comprehend. And how? By faith.

He was all in all to the ancient worthies. They knew not all He was to them and for them, for He had not yet then so unfolded His glorious plans as He has done since. We know more of what He was to them and for them than they knew themselves. Yet He was all in all to them. He presented Himself to them in two relations—as the Promised One, and as the Promiser. And their faith in Him rested both in the promise and the Promiser, and so became the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.

He came to our first parents in the garden at the time of their perversion, and assured them of a seed of woman who should bruise the serpent's head. They accepted the assurance that the future Deliverer would come, and their faith was the substance of hoped-for reality.

They accepted this assurance at the lips of the Promiser as a living, present God and Saviour, and their faith was the evidence of things not seen.

Who was the promised One? Christ the Son of God. And who was the Promiser? Jehovah, who was to be the Christ.

He came to Abraham and called him forth to view the stars, numberless in multitude, and assured him that his children should be, like them, without number, and that from his loins should come the promised seed, in whom all nations should be blessed. His faith of Abraham accepted the glorious prediction as certainly to be fulfilled, and so his faith was the substance of things hoped for, and this because he trusted in the Promiser as able and faithful to fulfil His promise. And so his faith was to him the evidence of things not seen.

To the Royal Psalmist and the prophets he revealed Himself as both the *root* and the *offspring* of David, and thus as both the Promiser and the Promised One, as a present Saviour, and a Saviour to come. Thus all the "elders" who obtained enrolment upon the scroll of faith, God, our Saviour, was revealed, though unseen, as the living, present God of grace, and the

believed in Him as truly as if He had been standing before them, evident to their senses; and they therefore believed also in His promises of the Deliverer to come, who, through faith was to them a reality as substantial as He would have been had they been set forward in time to the day of His coming in the flesh; and thus seen, and heard, and touched, and handled the living person of the predicted Messiah, as did Peter, and James, and all the twelve; or leaned upon His bosom, as did the beloved John. Their faith was the future realised substantially, and the present seen evidently, and their faith found all, both the present and the future, in the Lord himself. They stood in Him, and were complete in Him.

Even so should it be with us, and our faith should be yet more triumphant, yet more joyous, yet more a conquering power.

Christ has already come and gone, and come again. The promise of His coming has had its glorious fulfilment. The great atoning sacrifice has been made. The law has been completely satisfied for us, and His perfect righteousness is ours. Death and hell have been vanquished, and life and immortality secured. He has come and gone, but He has come again, and is with us evermore. Like the ancients, we have Him present with us, and we have also the promise before us that He will come again, and will then receive us to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also, to behold His glory. And in these things He is still to us the Promiser and the Pro-

mised One. But then, besides all this, we have what the elders had not in the glorious past. Our faith stands, in the past, present, and future, in what Christ has done, what He is, and what He is to be, to us. The past has for us a wealth of significance peculiar and distinct and full, in which the ancients could not be enriched, for it was not then yet unfolded. But all our faith stands in Christ, whether for the past, or present, or the time to come. In Christ we have all; and our faith, if it rests in Him, and is full, is to us the realisation of the past, the substance of the future, and the evidence of the present. And it makes Christ to us our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that according as it is written, if we glory, we may glory in the Lord.

The answer, then, to the questions, Why is it that, with so glorious a revelation of the Lord in His Word, we have no fuller revelation of Him in our hearts? and, How shall we secure the boon desired? is obvious at a glance.

Defective faith is the one sole cause of defective experience, and full faith is the one sole means by which the heavenly boon may be realised.

For example—

A COLLEGE STUDENT

Was, in answer to his mother's prayers, convinced of sin, and converted to God. At first he was very happy in Christ. The love and loveliness of the

Saviour were unfolded to him sweetly, and filled him with unspeakable delight. This early joy was, indeed, somewhat fitful, and oftentimes, after hours and days of peace and light, darkness and distress would come upon him, and in his struggles to find the light, he was often baffled, and groped along in the darkness, until, at a moment when he was not thinking of it at all, or struggling in the least, some view of God in His works, or some revelation of God in His Word, would come up before him, and he would enjoy another feast of many hours or days.

Many months passed in this way, but at last he became thoroughly dissatisfied with this life of ups and downs, and began to struggle for a higher plane, and his struggles lasted years before he learned the way.

With him, as with so many more, no expedient was left untried which his troubled heart could devise.

Fastings and prayers, resolutions and vows, penance and work, were put to the test in every way, and all in vain. Darkness grew more dense, hardness more stone-like, coldness more icy, emptiness more hollow, in his soul, to his own apprehension, from month to month. And yet his efforts were redoubled, and his disappointments more and more distressing.

At last, in utter helpless, hopeless despair, he abandoned every effort, and gave the whole matter up, saying in his heart of hearts, "I can do nothing

more. I have done all I can. If Christ saves me I shall be saved ; and if He does not, I shall be lost.

This seemed to him a desperate conclusion to arrive at, and yet he had fairly reached it. Nor did he have any hope that this was to be the new and true self-abnegation starting-point of a joyous life in Christ. Yet so it proved.

Shortly afterwards, having opened the Word of God at the Epistle to the Romans, he read the first and second chapters without any great or special interest, but in the third the light began to dawn upon him, and when he came to the fifth he saw what he had never seen it before, the great and glorious reality that salvation is by grace through faith, that Christ had both suffered and obeyed in the sinner's place, and that the sinner, trusting in Jesus, is reckoned righteous, even though he has never done a right act, or thought a right thought, toward God in all his life. So now he found out that Christ is our righteousness, and began to rejoice in Him with such joy as he had never known before, even in the sunny days of his early Christian course.

Thenceforth he took Christ for all and in all. He was crucified and dead to all his former expedients and alive in Christ. And now for these many years he has been walking in the light, full of the peace of God, and has been proclaiming the gospel of the grace of God with trumpet-tongue, saying none other things than these, that Christ is complete, and complete in Him.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NATURE.

CERTAIN shrewd ones approached the blessed Saviour on one occasion with a question, by which they hoped to entrap Him, and spring upon Him the deadfall of Roman power to crush Him. "Is it lawful to pay tribute unto Cæsar or not? Shall we pay, or shall we not?" A grave question of Jewish duty on the face of it, with a malignant power of Satanic mischief underneath. Jesus responded by saying, "Show me a penny," and, taking it in hand, He turned up the head, and asked, "Whose image and superscription hath it? Whose face and name do you see there?" They answer, Cæsar's, to which He replied in a way to silence them and send them away weaker in their own esteem, if not either wiser or better men in fact: "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things of God."

Man is the penny for our inspection, and the inquiry is whose image and superscription doth he bear?

The answer which will spring to every lip may be, not God's, at least not in man's perverted state. But is that so? It certainly is so in regard to the moral

image man bears,—the use to which his faculties and powers have been perverted ; but is it so in regard to the faculties and powers themselves? The Roman coin might easily have been perverted to uses very opposite of those for which it was struck off and put in circulation—it might even have been made the price of rebellion against Cæsar, instead of tributing money to him ; yet the image and superscription would have remained Cæsar's all the same. A man does not bear the stamp and signature of God in the form and features of his soul, notwithstanding the degraded aims and objects to which he devotes himself? Does not the likeness of God indelibly remain stamped upon our faculties and powers, even though wholly defaced from the principle by which they are governed ?

One thing seems entirely clear, God made man responsive, as well as responsible to Himself.

God is infinite in knowledge ; man is receptive capacity for knowledge, and has in this respect a new feature of infinitude, that of endless growth.

God is all-wise. Man has capacity for wisdom. God is love. Man has a heart for love. God is sovereign. Man has power of choice. God is a king with rightful authority to command. Man has conscience and a will, and can render obedience as he will. God is a father with a father's heart. Man has capacity for filial affection, in perfect responsiveness to God's paternal love. God was, and is, and is to be, the one only absolute uncreated Being, and

has created all things. Man has perceptive and reflective faculties to see and understand the works of His creation not only, but to apprehend God's own uncreated existence, and to appreciate the beauties of His holiness, the wonders of His goodness, the glories of His power, the majesty of His authority, and so to know God, which is eternal life, and to understand His love, which is eternal bliss, and to love Him with all his heart, which is eternal righteousness.

With this matter all clear before us, it is not difficult to understand wherein the image of God was defaced by man's perversion. The faculties, and powers, made to be responsive in all things to God, were turned from him and put to other use. The penny made for tribute-money to support the throne of Cæsar was devoted to its subversion.

Self was enthroned in God's stead in the heart, to rule over every province of the soul; the image of Satan was enstamped upon the governing principle of the soul, which, in all its faculties, bore the image of God: the same thing in effect was secured by the serpent in the garden, in the case of the first Adam, that he attempted without success on the mountain-top, in view of all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, with the second Adam,—a devotion to Satanic power and a discipleship to Satanic wisdom instead of God.

Nor is it any less easy to see wherein the new birth consists. A restoration of the coin to its intended

use, the conversion and application of all the faculties and powers of the soul to their responsive relations to God. In the new birth God is welcomed back to his throne in the heart, and his sway begins in every province of the soul: the perceptive faculties open their eyes to see Him, the reflective to understand Him, the governmental yield delighted obedience to Him, and the appreciative begin to adore and love Him. He is seen as a Creator, and the greatness of His power is acknowledged with amazement and delight; in the grandeur of His wisdom and knowledge, and He is adored: in the fulness of His grace and He fills, and floods, and melts, and moulds the heart.

Now then we see what the new life is: it is God in His holy temple. And we see how Christ is the life. He is God come down to us, to win us to Him, and thus to enter in and repossess His holy temple. And we see how the new life can be—nay, must be—a series of glad surprises, for in its very nature it contains all the elements of gladness and surprise.

Is it a glad and a glorious thing, when a palace, once been deserted to owls, and bats, and beasts, and mould, and crumbling ruin, to have its rightful owner come back and cleanse, and purify, rebuild, and rebeautify his old abode?

Is it, when a gallant ship at sea is cast away a sinking wreck, about to be engulfed with all its living freight, a joyous hour when another, and greater, and better, comes to rescue and to save?

Is it, when a nation is broken to fragments, reduced to anarchy, ruined, lost, a noble and blessed thing when patriotism springs to the rescue, braves death in all its forms, strikes for life and liberty, and achieves it, refounds the government, restores order, harmony, and prosperity?

Ah! these and all other earthly similes are weak and beggarly to set forth the power and bliss of a soul restored to God, by having God restored to itself.

God is many-sided, so to speak: He has as many aspects as are presented in His universe of created things. And man is an epitome of the universe. Angels are spirits without material bodies; men combine in themselves the spiritual and material: and God, in taking to Himself a body to dwell amongst us, has allied Himself to us in this respect, and to the whole material universe as well.

On every side, in every aspect, man was made to be responsive to God.

In one aspect, God is knowledge—infinite knowledge; and some men, in scanning the heavens with a telescope of mathematics, and the earth with a microscope whose imaginary lenses magnify millions of times over more than glass can be made to do, see so much of the infinitude of His knowledge, that they seem to think He is all intellect, without any heart.

In another aspect, God is justice; and sometimes men who have offended all their lives, and have found out at last the greatness of their crime, have

no thought for anything else but the awful justice of God, and it drives them mad.

In another aspect, God is love; and some men see this so plainly, that His justice is eclipsed by it, and they think it impossible for Him to vindicate His authority by the eternal banishment of incorrigible offenders from His presence, and the glory of His power.

In another aspect, God is grace; and happy is the offending one who sees it, and casts himself upon it entirely and for ever.

In another aspect, God is æsthetic; and he is favoured one who sees in every line and form and hue and shade of beauty, in the heavens above and in the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth the embodiment of God's own beautiful thoughts and thoughts of beauty.

Now, for all these, and all other aspects of God man has responsive capacities.

And what is righteousness? Rightness; right adjustment of all these capacities in responsiveness to God. And what is life? It is the true and normal action of all these capabilities in responsiveness to God. To know God truly is life. To love God supremely is life. To trust God with all the heart is life. To obey God from the heart is life. To see and serve God with all the soul is life. Not to know and love, and trust, and serve God is death.

We were dead in trespasses and in sins, and condemned to eternal death, and had no price in our

hands wherewith to pay our ransom. And we were perverted from our actual responsiveness to God, and devoted to Satanic principles and aims, and had no power nor wish to set ourselves right again. So our God adjusted Himself to our case, came down to us in our nature, fulfilled all the law in our place, paid down His life for ours a ransom, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, there to be our perpetual righteousness and justification and sanctification, and finally our glorification. And so He has met our case completely. Our faith grasps the fact, and rests in God our Saviour, and we are saved.

The aspect of God's justice presents itself to us, and we look up and behold in Jesus its perfect vindication.

The aspect of His holiness is unfolded to us, and—alas! for us—it would be a consuming fire if we were naked and exposed in our sins. But, no; we lift up our eyes, and in Jesus we see our righteousness. He fulfilled all righteousness in our stead, and He lives in all the fulness of righteousness to purify us unto Himself, and present us faultless before the throne.

The aspects of God's love, and grace, and peace, wisdom, and power, and knowledge, present themselves; and we look to Jesus, and behold all are ours in Him, for He is ours, and we are His, and He is God's.

This is life eternal.

CHAPTER X.

ASCERTAINMENT.

ST PAUL enjoins us to examine ourselves, and prove ourselves, whether we be in the faith or not; and every dictate of wisdom enforces his injunction. Our safety is in it, our peace is in it, our power is in it. To journey onward, pitching nightly our tent one day nearer to we know not which, heaven or hell, when we might look up and see; to be upon one of two divergent roads, terminating, the one in the eternal city, and the other in the infernal pit, with landmarks and finger-boards on every mile of the way, and yet not to scrutinise and know which road it is we are traveling, is the very madness of folly. No wonder that those who do not know sing the melancholy song:—

“Oft it causes anxious thought,
Am I His, or am I not.”

The wonder is, that it does not drive them to ascertain the fact for themselves, or drive them mad.

A greater wonder, however, than even this it is that some good people derive a mournful kind of consolation from the fact that they are really in doubt about the matter. They mourn because they do not know, and then are comforted because they mourn! They


are troubled because of their grievous doubts, and then gather hope because they doubt and are troubled!

Well, well ! better so than to be wholly dead, and have no thought or care about it ! Better to have some prickling pains than be wholly paralysed ! Better to be full of aches and anguish, than all gone in numbness !

Yet, after all, that is a low state of life and health to be consoled with. A melancholy sort of comfort at the very best. One's harp, if taken from the willows at all when he is in this condition, ought, indeed, to be struck only to minor melodies, and hung up again as soon as possible.

But the greatest wonder of all is that, with the Word of God in hand, and all its bright examples before them, they can torture these melancholy doubts, with the fruitless anxiety they beget, into evidence to themselves that they have life and health not only, but are really in better condition than the presumptuous ones who profess to know the fact that they are Christ's indeed, and that He is theirs.

Place side by side the gloomy doubts of this modern class of Christians with the triumphant assurance of all the ancient worshippers of God, from Abel, to whom God witnessed that He had respect to him and to his offerings, down to John, who saw in Patmos the Son of man in His glorified estate, and revelled in the certainties not only, but in the splendour of the New Jerusalem, and what an amazing contrast you have before you !



Suppose you run through the calendar of B worthies, or take any number of them from different ages of the world, and change their expressions into the song—

“ ’Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought ;
Do I love the Lord or no,
Am I His or am I not.”

Job, for example, who says :—

“ I know that my Redeemer liveth,
And shall stand in the latter day upon the earth :
Mine eyes shall see Him,
And not another.”

Or put the song of doubt into the mouth of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Isaiah, Daniel, the apostles, Augustine, Luther, Whitfield, Wesley Edwards, and how would it sound ? Put it in place of David’s Psalm, the xxiii.—

“ The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not want.”

Or xxvii.—

“ The Lord is my light and my salvation ;
Whom shall I fear ?
The Lord is the strength of my life ;
Of whom shall I be afraid ?

Or xl.—

“ I waited patiently for the Lord ;
And He inclined unto me,
And heard my cry.
He brought me up out of an horrible pit,
Out of the miry clay,

And set my feet upon a rock,
 And established my goings.
 And hath put a new song into my mouth,
 Even praise unto our God :
 Many shall see it, and fear,
 And shall trust in the Lord."

Or xlv. —

"God is our refuge and strength."

Put the song of anxious doubt in place of any of these, or almost any other of all the songs of the Sweet Singer of Israel, and can you imagine anything more out of place ?

Or imagine the apostle Paul, instead of writing as he did to Timothy from Rome, as the time of His end drew near :—"For I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course : Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day,"—imagine him writing in the strain, "My time is at hand, and I am in doubt. 'Tis a point I long to know ; am I His or am I not ?"

Ah ! the absurdity is too great, too glaring, to be imagined ! Yet if the assumption of doubters that uncertainty and solicitude is really a mark of true religion, and therefore a ground of hope, were true, why should not Job and David, Isaiah and Paul, sing the doleful song of uncertainty rather than shout the glad notes of triumphant assurance ?

Ah ! there is something wrong in the kind of religion which seeks its nurture, support, and consolation

in doubt and fear, instead of faith and hope. May they tremble and be afraid who have such religion as this. They ought to be anxious, and ought not to draw comfort or extract self-complacency for a single moment from their own anxious feelings. They ought not for an instant to rest until they fled for refuge to Christ, the hope set before us in the Gospel, and found Him, and He has lifted them out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay in which they are sunk, and established their feet, those of David, and Job, and Paul, upon the rock, and put the new song of praise in their mouth.

Their religion is wrong in this radical feature. Their own goodness is that to which they look for peace and assurance, instead of Christ. They look down into their own hearts for grounds of rejoicing, and do not find them. The more they look for, the less they find; the deeper they search, the deeper seems their case.

Then what can they do, poor souls? If this thing does not prove them to be right, why, of course they are wrong; if this does not prove them wrong, then they are in peril; and so they console themselves by taking it for granted that they must be right because to themselves they appear to be wrong. Poor consolation, indeed! Ah, if they would look up to Christ, instead of looking down into their souls, for the ground of hope and assurance, they would find in His bleeding love, in His loving attention, in His reigning power, and in His spotless righteousness.

eousness, and in His constant, loving presence, in His rescuing, saving grace, they would find the most abundant ground of assurance, and their doleful song of doubt would be turned into a shout of triumph.

The subtlest feature of this whole code of doubt and fear is this, that it sets forth with a plausibility which smacks of the arch-diplomatist of the kingdom of lies, that doubt is evidence of true humility; and true humility, as all well know, is one of the foundation-gifts of the Holy Spirit.

What is this? What, but putting self instead of Christ? It assumes that self is the ground of hope, or else it could not be the ground of fear; and therefore to doubt is to distrust one's self, and so is true humility. But who made self the ground of either hope or fear? Not God. The Gospel sets Christ forth as the only ground of hope; and if so, Christ is also the only ground of doubt. To hope in Christ is to give up all hope in self. No man ever built on Christ until he had wholly given up building on himself. Therefore to build on Christ is self-renunciation, which is true humility. But to keep on trying to build on self—trying to find something in one's self to build upon, is the very opposite of self-renunciation, and so the very opposite of true humility.

Job, in the presence of Jehovah, who had spoken to him out of the whirlwind, and shown him the wonders of creation and providence in heaven, earth, and sea, renounced all self-complacency and self-re-

liance, and exclaimed, "I have heard of thee by th hearing of the ear, but now I behold thee with min eyes ; wherefore I abhor myself."

Isaiah, before the throne, in the vision vouchsafed unto him, exclaimed, "Woe is me ! I am undone I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell amongst a people of unclean lips : for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

Paul was taken up into the third heavens, and saw things unutterable, and in the effulgence o heavenly light saw the exceeding sinfulness of sin and saw himself to be the chief of sinners.

No self-renunciation was ever more complete, r humility was ever more profound, than that of Job, Isaiah, and Paul ; yet no assurance of grace and salvation was ever more triumphant or jubilant than theirs ; and the philosophy of both the one and the other, both the humility and the assurance, was, that they had learnt to look away from themselves to hope to God our Saviour.

This explains perfectly and most illustriously, the injunction of the apostle, Examine yourselves, and prove yourselves, whether ye be in the faith or not. Aye, whether in the faith or not ! That is the question, Are you in the faith ? Have you renounced your self-trust, self-confidence, self-complacency, self-everything ? Do you see with Job's eyes, and abhor yourself ; and with Isaiah's, yourself undone ; and with Paul's, yourself the chief of sinners, and no good thing in you ? And do you utterly, now and for

ever, abandon all hope of making yourself any more acceptable to yourself or to your God?

And do you, on the other hand, turn from yourself to Christ, as your only refuge, only hope? and do you put your trust in Him, and Him alone for everything?

Then you are in the faith. And if you examine yourself in this way, and find yourself out of yourself, but in Christ as the ground of hope, you find no longer that doubt is humility, because it is doubt of the ground on which you stand, which is Christ, and not yourself. And you find that assurance is not pride; for it is assurance in Christ, not in yourself, which is true humility.

PART II.

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WORK.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

WITNESSING.

“And ye shall be witnesses unto me.”

WORK for Christ is witnessing for Him. As there is no other name given under heaven whereby we can be saved but the name of Jesus, so there is, in the main, no other work to do to save men except that of pointing them to Him for salvation.

Do we desire to have the dead raised, Lazarus-like, from the sepulchre of their cold indifference and unbelief, and made alive in Christ? Then we must, Mary and Martha like, bring Christ to them in His living power to save. We may indeed have some stone to roll away, even then, before the command will be given, and the dead come forth alive to our embrace; but that is only part of the same great work of bringing together the Saviour and those we desire to have Him save.

Have we ourselves, like the woman at the well, found One who has told us all our sins and gladdened us by the grace which forgives them all, and convinced us that He is the Christ? Then we must leave all and hasten to our friends, and tell them so; and let them also go forth to Him, and invite Him to come in and abide with them, that they may with us believe in Him and be forgiven.

Have we, Aquila and Priscilla like, received the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost; and do we see those who, Apollos-like, though they may be mighty in the Scriptures and full of eloquence, are as yet experimentally acquainted only with the baptism of water and of repentance? We must take them to our hearts and show them the more excellent way. We must lead them out of the first foundation, things onward upward, into the higher, deeper things of Christ, that they too may have the baptism of the Spirit and of fire. And how? By pointing them to Jesus for the higher and the deeper, even as for the first things of experience.

There are ten thousand things to be done to bring the Saviour to the sinner, and the sinner to the Saviour; but this one thing of bringing them together is the grand object of all true Christian work.

Two things are indispensable to the work of witnessing effectively for Jesus. The first is to know Him ourselves, and the second is to have an interest in making Him known to others. It is not enough that we think, or hope, or trust that we know Him.

Feeble and uncertain testimony has very little power. The witness who knows whereof he affirms, and gives clear and decided testimony to it, carries conviction to every one of the truth asserted by him. But he who guesses, and thinks, and hopes, and believes, in regard to matters of which he ought to know, convinces no one. *To know* the true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, is life eternal. *Not to know* them is eternal death. And though one may know God our Saviour without knowing that he knows Him, he is a poor witness for Him. And the first thing he does should be to go himself afresh to Jesus, and gain a deep, true, and certain knowledge of Him. Wait upon Him, as the disciples in the upper chamber at Jerusalem waited upon Him, until endowed with power from on high, and then go and tell, in all the freshness of a heart and soul full and overflowing, the wonderful works of God our Saviour.

Witnessing for Jesus requires also an interest in Him fresh and deep to be effective. One might be a good witness in any court, without a particle of interest in the case before it. Not so, however, in the matter of testimony for our Saviour. Usually witnesses are compelled to testify in court when they would very gladly avoid it if they could; but testimony for Christ is, on the other hand, as generally quite voluntary. Sometimes, indeed, the highest possible evidence for Christ is given—as in the case of Stephen, whilst his persecutors were trying him

and stoning him to death—in positions one would not choose to take if he could help it; but even then it is generally the result of previous witness-bearing like that of Stephen, voluntary, and full of power. When opposers cannot gainsay or resist the wisdom and force of Christian testimony, then they resort to persecution; and then comes the highest test of a Christian—*and so the highest testimony*—that from which our term martyr comes, which means witness—testimony at the peril of life itself. No one ever came, however, to this high honour, with its crown reserved in heaven, who had not a Christ-like interest to induce him first to go of his own accord wherever the Spirit would have him go with the story of the cross.

Freshness and gladness are the chief elements of the testimony of those who, like the woman at the well, have just found the Saviour.

There is, however, a grievous fault in every case where these elements are lacking. Freshness should never cease, and gladness should ever increase in every follower of Jesus. Christian experience is cumulative in happiness, and ought never for a single day to lose its dewy freshness. Think of the apostolic band. Andrew and Peter, James and John when pointed by John the Baptist to Jesus as the Lamb of God, joined Him at once, and at His call followed Him with gladness from that time forth. And when Philip in the same way made His acquaintance, and called also his brother Nathaniel to follow Him, they too were glad enough to accept His call.

And Matthew, called at the receipt of customs, in his gladness made a feast for his new-found Saviour, and joyously gave up his lucrative employment, and devoted his life to His service. So with each and all. And every time thereafter, when they saw His power displayed in miracles, or heard His superhuman wisdom unfolded in His teachings, their hearts were freshly gladdened, and their knowledge deepened. And when the day of power came, and the Holy Spirit descended and filled the place, and filled their souls, their gladness was so great, and their testimony so strangely fresh, that those not thus affected thought them beside themselves, or filled with new wine. Yet, oh what power there was that day in their testimony for Jesus! Then all that Jesus had done and said while on earth came freshly up in memory, with new and glad significance. And the Scriptures, before locked up, now poured forth their treasures of grace and truth in Jesus, from whom they had received grace for grace, and filled their souls with joy.

Following them thenceforth through all their days, and through every stage of their work as made known in the Acts and in their epistles, we find no day when their freshness ceased, or when their happiness was not increased.

Hence their power as witnesses for Jesus, and hence its accumulation from day to day. Every day added its fresh store of wisdom and knowledge to the stock gained before; whilst no day passed without its dew-like manna, fresh from heaven, and its crystal

water from the rock, and its daily sacrifices of answered prayer and praise in the presence chamber of Him who ever abode in their hearts as His own holy temple. And so they were ever fresh, ever strong, ever happy, and therefore ever fruitful, to the end more and more.

There is something wonderful in their ripened fruit, especially those of Paul and John. Of the others we shall know more when we meet them in the home above; but of Paul in his later years we see enough in such scenes as those on board the Alexandrian ship, and in the island of Melita, and in his bondage at Rome in Cæsar's household, and in his epistles written from his prison-place, full of freshness, full of triumph, full of power—enough to know that the Sun of Righteousness rose in his soul as his sun of life descended, and the one only reached its meridian when the other touched its horizon. And of John what shall we say? What can we say that will not be weak and faint, in comparison with what we know of the amazing fruits borne by him in the extreme of age? An hundred years old and more when he died. Too feeble to bear himself into an assembly of the saints; yet strong enough to bear testimony of such force and freshness, such brilliancy and glory, as makes it the crowning glory, the culminating book, of the sacred record. Oh, what vision of our Saviour! What unfoldings of His conquering progress! What views of the New Jerusalem, of

happy home! And what earnest, glowing, glorious invitations to all to come to Jesus! And what aspirations for Jesus to come to us!

Ah! there is in these examples a demonstration of the amazing power still untouched, undeveloped by us, of which we have at best conceptions very feeble. An illustration or two of the unfolding and application of the boundless power latent in the gospel, stored up like treasures of the mines, in the mountains of God's grace and truth, for those who seek it with the miner's perseverance and seek it by faith, will serve to bring home to us at one and the same time the great reserve force at our command, and the blessedness of drawing upon it and using it as opportunity is given us by Him whose witnesses we are.

CHAPTER II.

LATENT POWER.

"And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the word of God with boldness. . . . And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all."—Acts iv. 31-33.

THE lame man sat for alms in the temple gate called Beautiful, when Peter said to him, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have I give thee in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk;" and when Peter gave him his hand to help him, he rose up and walked, and leaped, and praised God, and entered into the temple walking, leaping and praising God, and all the people saw him and wondered at the miracle, for the man was about forty years old. Then the multitude came running together, and seemed to be in awe of the apostles, if they were gods come down from heaven, and Peter and John declared to them that it was not by their own power and holiness that the man was healed, but by the power of God through faith in Jesus, and many believed, and the number was about five thousand.

The rulers of the people were alarmed by this, and

they saw that the blood of Jesus was about to be brought upon them by the popular voice, and they laid hands upon the apostles, and put them in hold over night, and next morning assembled a grand council to try them.

Confronted the next day with the high priest, elders, scribes, and all the princes of the sacerdotal line, the apostles boldly affirmed that the miracle had been wrought by the power of God in the name of Jesus, the Son of God, whom they had crucified.

The miracle itself could not be denied. The lame man healed was himself a standing, walking, leaping, living miracle known and read of all. The testimony of the apostles could not be set aside. And what could the rulers do? They could not put the apostles to death, for the popular feeling would have condemned the rulers, and put them to death by stoning, if they had undertaken to condemn the apostles. So they threatened them and set them at liberty.

And now comes a scene peculiarly instructive. Released, the apostles at once went to their own company, and reported all said and done.

In these days, when men achieve any great and signal triumph, they are heroised by a grand dinner, with toasts and speeches. The apostolic custom seems to have been somewhat different from ours. There may indeed have been a supper, an agape, a feast of love. Very likely it was so. But their joy took the form of prayer, and their prayer was ex-

ultant praise ; and then, instead of the thunder of popular applause, the place was shaken by power divine, and all were filled with the Holy Ghost.

Already before their testimony had resulted in the salvation of some five thousand souls, but now they were baptized afresh, and all spoke the Word of God with fresh force and greater boldness than ever, whilst the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power, and great grace was upon them all.

Here then in this scene, so graphically portrayed by the pen of inspiration, we have an example of the constantly renewed freshness, and cumulative power of primitive Christian experience, and so of the primitive Christian power in witnessing for Jesus.

This was a new Pentecost, with its new manifestations of the presence and grace and power of God, and its new and greater apprehensions of God our Saviour by His disciples. And this is but one of a constantly recurring series of similar renewals and advancements, by which the plans of God were unfolded, His work advanced, and Christians made stronger and bolder, and kept in the dew of freshness during all the primitive period of the Christian era.

And in this the latent power of the gospel was continually elaborated and applied, and thus it was that the gospel went forth from conquering to conquer.

It was the apostolic prerogative to testify, as eye-witnesses chosen for the purpose, to the fact that Christ had risen from the dead, and gone into heaven.

It is the Christian privilege, in common with the apostles, to witness for Jesus as received from heaven and enthroned in the hearts of men.

The apostles saw the Saviour alive after His death, and identified Him by many infallible signs, and witnessed His ascension from the earth, and therefore knew whereof they affirmed.

Christians see Him, and receive Him by faith, and have Him abiding in their hearts, the hope of glory, and they, too, know whereof they bear witness. But neither apostles nor Christians can rest upon the past alone. Their testimony, like the manna, would grow stale and offensive if they did. A daily constant freshness, the heavenly dew every morning, the gushing spring within welling up fresh and overflowing all the time, constant accessions as well as renewals of strength and boldness, of joy and peace, of grace and truth. This it is, and this alone, that can bring out the latent power of the gospel, and make it a conquering power to save the world.

And now for an illustration from modern times.

THE OLD SERMONS *v.* THE NEW TESTIMONY.

A very earnest man, whilst the pastor of a country church, was favoured by a powerful revival; and in the heat and fervour of the work prepared and preached a course of sermons, every one of which seemed to tell upon the people with great and happy force.

From this his first place of work he was called to a

second and more important one; and here again he was favoured as before, and preached the same sermons with still greater results.

Another removal took him to one of the largest churches of one of our great cities, where he had not only a field vastly greater, but one filled with greater obstacles, and requiring greater power than either of the others. A refined scepticism reigned in the city, strongly intrenched in Christian forms and names, and fortified by superior culture, refinement, fashion, and morality. He had rulers, scribes, and Pharisees against him, and knew well their strength, but he had strong confidence in God and in His cause.

In both the first and second places he had been driven to the most entire submission of himself, and all his plans and hopes, to Christ, and so had been baptized afresh for work in both; and during all the long and fruitful years of God's refreshing presence with him there, he himself had been refreshed more frequently and fully than any one of all those for whom he prayed and preached.

And now, here again, more than ever, he was pressed by the circumstances of his position to cast himself upon the Lord, and abide continually for wisdom and strength in Him; and here again he preached once more the same remarkable course of sermons, revised, improved, and made more telling than before; and here again they were attended by the power of God, and crowned with a larger fruitage than in both the other places put together.


In the course of time he was called to preside over an important public institution where there were many young men preparing to become ministers of the gospel. The hope that the mantle of his apostolic zeal and success might thus fall upon a new generation of men, and his power be perpetuated and multiplied, induced this last change of field.

The institution nestled amidst the shades of an ample grove, and was surrounded by a lovely village. The arrival of the eloquent and famous doctor was hailed with delight, and his presence excited high expectations, not only of prosperity to the school, but of progress to the cause of Christ. The institution prospered, but religion languished, until at last the doctor began to be somewhat oppressed by the state of things, and after all due preparation, as the best thing he could do, so it seemed to him, preached here again the famous course so often and so greatly blessed before.

In connexion with his preaching, meetings for prayer were multiplied, visiting committees appointed, and other measures taken to secure, if possible, a real, general, generous harvest.

But after weeks of strenuous effort, a sense of disappointment crept like a cold and chilling cloud over the whole community, because the hoped-for results were not achieved. No one was converted—nothing marked and cheering happened.

All this while a little company of students, not unlike the two Wesleys, Whitefield, and their



companions in the university, were banded together for mutual encouragement and help in seeking Christ for themselves. One amongst them, it seems, had an inexpressible desire, as Moses had, to see the glory of God for himself, and to see his signal power displayed also in saving others; and his desires were granted. First he himself was made one of the happiest of living men. His heart leaped and praised God, and all the people saw that he had a leaping, praising heart, and they were filled with wonder. And very soon another student, not of the little band, came to him for counsel, and unfolded the condition of his mind as something fearful, in its intensity of darkness and despair. God gave him wisdom to discern the truth and unfold the remedy. Whilst pointing him to the Lamb of God, the young man was suddenly overwhelmed and overpowered. His joy was too great for utterance, even in ejaculations. It was some hours before he was sufficiently calmed down and quieted to do or say any coherent thing.

This was in the morning. As the shades of night drew on, and he became a little settled, the two started out together and called upon some of the leading families. As the young men talked, the people were filled with amazement, like that of those who heard the apostles and their fellow-disciples on the day of Pentecost speak in tongues before unknown. In every house, save one, where they found a chilling censorship instead of the ready ear,

the power of God was present to follow up their testimony by that of the Holy Ghost.

That was the beginning of a work which visited almost every room and every soul in the college, and nearly every family in the village. A work begun in the simple witnessing of a happy student, freshly baptized from on high, and carried on for months and years mainly by the same instrumentality, multiplied and extended.

Comment is needless. The sermons really embodied the gospel as much the last time they were preached as the first; but its power was undeveloped and unapplied. When preached each time before, the gospel in them filled the heart of the eloquent preacher himself, by the power of the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, and they had all the force of direct personal testimony from him to the people; nay, more, they had the greater effect of being messages direct from God to the people by the preacher. And they were brought home to the hearts of the people by the same power that sent them. But when preached the last time, they were not the utterances of a heart full of the Holy Ghost, and were not therefore messages from God himself, but simply sermons from the doctor, and so fell powerless.

But the testimony of the student, though very simple, was direct from God, fresh in his heart, and fresh from his heart as it came from God, and so was not allowed to fall and fail. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth

and it is the power of God from every one that testifieth to it in the freshness of its development. Power is latent in the gospel, but elaborated in the heart, and in it there is a world of unelaborated power. The power of electric action lies all quiescent and asleep in a thousand forms and things about us, and we see nothing of it. Put a few plates of zinc into a little acid, connect them by wires, and attach to each of the two extremes a wire to serve, the one as a positive, and the other as a negative, and you develop a power to carry your thoughts to the ends of the world on wings of lightning.

The power to produce this electric action is quiescent in the zinc and acid while they are separate. So is it with the power of the gospel; it is latent until the truth and the heart are brought together, until Christ and the soul have met each other. Then, when Christ has been received into the soul by faith, the power is developed, which, by the tongue, and pen, and life, goes forth to all the world in Christian testimony.

It is said, with what truth I know not, that in a single drop of water there is electric force enough, if developed and applied, to explode the solid globe. This may be true or false, but we do know that one thousand millionth part of the water on the globe, converted into steam, does in fact plough the ocean and belt the world, sea and land, with commerce, and fill it with fabrics and appliances of luxury and convenience. And we do know, too, that

this grand force has been sleeping around us all unknown to man for five thousand years and more, until at last in our day it has been disclosed and harnessed to the car of progress to transform the earth.

So in the waters of the river of life there sleeps a power which is yet to be elaborated in Christian hearts, and applied by Christian testimony to the world's salvation. Any single one of the exceeding great and precious promises received in the heart, is enough to dispel a world of infidelity from the head; and in the broad stream of revelation there is vital force, ample, if realised and used as in pentecostal times, to subdue the world to the peaceful, happy sway of the blessed Jesus, its lawful King.

CHAPTER III.

THE TRUE POSITION.

ISAIAH prophesies of the Messiah, whose expected advent was the inspiration of all his glowing words, as

“A root out of dry ground,
Having no form or comeliness,
That when we see Him we should desire Him.”

Solomon sings of Him, in contrast with this, as—

“Chief amongst ten thousand,
The one altogether lovely.”

And our Saviour likens Himself to the vine, His Father to the husbandman, and His disciples to the branches.

The vine in winter, as cultivated in many countries, when closely pruned, looks for all the world like a root turned up out of dry ground, without form or comeliness. But in summer, when it has budded, blossomed, put forth leaves, shot out branches, and is bringing its rich clusters onward to perfection for the vintage, the vine is regal in the fruit-world in its beauty—chief amongst ten thousand, and altogether lovely.

The glory of the husbandman and of the vine is in the fruit, which is all borne by the branches. Hence it is that our Saviour says of His disciples, in His prayer for them to the Father, *The glory which thou gavest me I have given them*; and again, *All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them*. And to them He says, *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples*.

Whilst Christ was in the flesh on the earth, His life was one not merely of religious activities and philanthropic deeds, but of the power and presence of God. In everything He did and said there was the air and effluence of the superhuman, almighty, all-wise, all-loving One. Hence He says again in His prayer, *I have glorified thee on the earth*. And this glory of making the presence, power, wisdom, grace, and truth of God known in the world Himself while here, is that which Christ has committed to us, now that He himself has gone to the Father to receive the glory with Him which He had before the world was. And this is the fruit which is the glory of the vine and of the husbandman.

Religious and philanthropic schemes, agencies, and activities are very well and very necessary, but they are only trellis-work or stakes at best, and work of framing. The fruit does not grow and ripen by machinery, nor can you ever make stakes and trellises bear it. The vine, the living vine, the living vine alone, can produce the fruit, and the living branches in the vine alone can bear it.

Hence it is that Christ says to us, "I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing."

A man may abide in the love of his church, and cherish all its polity and plans, and abound in liberality, zeal, and activity for its glory and success, without bringing forth a single cluster of fruit to the glory of the Father or of the Son; but the child who asks and receives answer, and so makes the grace and power of God known in the simplest thing, does really and truly glorify Him in the world. A great man, standing head and shoulders above all his fellows in the world of theology, may give all his powers and all his days to the elaboration of a system, and may glorify himself amazingly thereby in the eyes of all; but the humblest man on earth who, through faith in Jesus, and glad testimony concerning His power and presence, is the means of bringing one single Lazarus forth from his tomb for all the world to look upon and behold what God can do, or one Bartimeus out of his blindness, that he himself may see the glory of his God, does more to glorify the Father and the Son than all the giant systems ever framed. The two men in Ulster, Ireland, who covenanted and prayed together, and waited on the Lord until the answer came in the rushing, mighty wind, which filled all Ireland and the world with its report, and crowned multitudes with tongues of fire, and filled myriads with the gladness of salvation, did

more to glorify God than all the learned and great men of the island, and of the Continent besides. The one poor youth in the seat of learning who saw and felt in his heart of hearts that nothing but the mighty power of God could arouse the great men of the institution, or save the young men committed to them for culture, and saw and felt that God could do it, and would, if called upon in faith and fervency until the answer should come, and so bowed himself before the Lord, and waited upon Him every day, and all the time, until the power descended, and the great men were aroused, and the young men saved,—this poor youth did more than all the great men above him to give lustre to the name and expansion to the kingdom of God on earth.

There is another side to this simile of the husbandman, vine, and branches.

Branches, although, when abiding in the vine, pruned by the husbandman, and full of foliage and fruit, are the glory of the husbandman and the vine, yet without the vine are dead and withered things; and even when in the vine, but not drawing from it life and power enough to bring forth fruit, they are cut off as useless hangers-on, absorbing vital force for no good purpose, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

Those who abide in Jesus live by faith in Him, work by faith, walk by faith, talk by faith, pray by faith, give by faith, and do everything as unto Jesus, not only, but as from Him, by Him, of Him. They

look to Jesus, and are justified, pardoned, saved, redeemed, and sanctified, and will be glorified in Him; they look to Jesus, and though halt, maimed, palsied, they are lifted up by His hand, and led onward, upheld by His right hand, and walk without weariness, and run without fainting to the end; they look to Jesus, and see that no power but His will avail, and so call upon Him, and He answers them, and His name is glorified; they look to Jesus, and see that no tongue is like the tongue of fire, and wait upon Him for it until it comes, and they have power to witness for Him with the promised signs attending their words; they look to Jesus, and He opens their hands to give, and to give more freely, more abundantly, or, if need be, they call for more, that they may have more to give, and He bestows it; they look to Jesus, and, in short, are wholly clad with His glorious armour, head, heart, feet, hands, tongue, and purse, and so they are His disciples, and can glorify His name, for they wear His uniform, and bear His image, and work His work, and show forth His power and presence.

There is, however, such a thing, and, alas! it is a thing too frequent altogether, as abiding in the name of Jesus, and clinging to it with great tenacity, without being in His spirit and in His plans at all, and without receiving the ceaseless inflow of His vital power, the Holy Comforter, and having it increased from time to time by the refreshing showers from heaven, according to the true law of the divine hus-

bandry. And there is such a thing as standing up for Jesus, without standing up in Him.

DUDLEY TYNG.

The late and lamented Dudley Tyng, as he was passing from the earthly vineyard to his higher position in the heavenly, drew near, and the light fell upon him from the open gateway; and as his father came up beside him, he said, "Father, stand up for Jesus." Then, after advancing a little farther on into the fuller effulgence, he spoke again, saying, "Father, stand up in Jesus." These injunctions were reported by his father as they fell from the lips of his dear son, and went abroad all over the land. And the first one struck a chord which vibrates still, and passed into a watchword for all Christian enterprise, and for all enterprising Christians; but the second seemed to find no chord keyed up and ready to respond. It is to be feared that this is indicative of the true state of the Christian world to-day—for Christ, more than in Him; and yet, if we may believe the words of Christ himself, and the history of all the progress of His kingdom, we have the secret of all power in these two words, "IN JESUS," with the converse of them, "JESUS IN US."

The Twelve, to whom our Saviour gave the injunction originally, "Abide in me, and I in you," may teach us, if we will permit them, the difference between for Jesus and in Jesus.

Even Judas, who at last betrayed his Master, stood

up for Him in days before; and doubting Thomas, with Peter, who denied Him in the day of trial, with all the rest, were with Him and He with them in many a work and many a journey. And when He sent them forth to all the places whither He intended going, to announce His purposed visits, they proclaimed the kingdom as at hand—and believed it, too; though they understood it to be political or sacerdotal, not spiritual; and they healed the sick, opened the eyes of the blind, cured all maladies, and cast out devils in His name, with a success and power that filled them with amazement; and they returned full of joy, saying, “Lord, even the devils are subject to us through Thy name.”

Nevertheless, they were all the while not only ignorant of the true power and glory of His kingdom as in and over the hearts of men, but they were often rebuking Him in thought, and sometimes in word, for His sayings and doings. They were for Him, and stood up boldly in His name and for His fame, and would have fought with swords—as Peter was ready to do in the garden of Gethsemane—in His defence, or to make Him king against the power of Cæsar; but they were not *in His plans*, nor was *His Spirit in them*. There was not between Him and them the community of ideas and impulses, principles and feelings, or the unity of aims and plans, without which they could not, like the vine and branches, work together in perfect harmony in the one great matter of glorifying the Father by an abundant vint-

age of heavenly fruit. Nor was there in them either the intelligence or stability, or sustained enthusiasm, to keep them steady, and bear them up in hours of unexpected trial, and make them conquerors in every struggle. When Satan's hour of darkness came, he grappled every man of them, by permission, as he had done Job long before, to sift them as wheat. Judas he carried with him fairly, for he belonged to him already. Peter he carried over very far, even to the verge of an utter wreck of his faith in Jesus, but the intercession of his Master saved him; and all of them he scattered like a flock of frightened sheep when the wolf makes his appearance. So they were pruned for once of all boastfulness and self-confidence. Then, again, after His resurrection, and after He had given them many demonstrations of His being alive—even putting the doubter's fingers into the print of the nails, and his hand into the spear-place in His side—yet even then, they, though called and commissioned apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, returned to their old vocation, gave up fishing for men, and became fishermen again.

But oh, how different after Pentecost! On that occasion, besides the outward sound and crowning symbol on their heads, and the inward endowment of tongues and prophecy, there was an inflow of the Holy Comforter, filling them with the consolations of a Christ within, better than a Christ with us, the Son of God come back again, no more to leave them,

but to abide with them ever—a very present King and Captain, Counsellor and Saviour; a King to order all their movements, a Captain to lead them through every battle, a Counsellor to induct them into all the principles and plans of His kingdom and of each campaign and conflict, and a Saviour to rescue them in every peril of the future, as he had already saved them in every danger of the past.

This is the highest example that can be given or asked, although it is that of very lowly men—merch fishermen of Galilee; but for fear it may be too high or too much obscured by the very dazzling power of its miraculous radiance, it may be well to take another, and take it from the common walks of life. Amongst the many that might be presented, none seem better adapted to encourage the most unlearned and unendowed by nature with gifts of mind or person, than this of the Pennsylvania farmer, in the history of his course as boy and man, given in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FARMER MISSIONARY.

IF the story of the Farmer Missionary could be told in his own language, and especially if it could be printed in *fac-simile* of his own hand-writing, it would seem stranger than fiction. At fifteen he could not distinguish a single letter of the alphabet, and he began to learn to write after he was thirty years of age. He wrote precisely as he talked, and his accent and pronunciation were of the broadest frontier style: *u* for *a* in was, *em* for them, *tu* for to, *mor'n* for more than, and the like. His sentences generally began with a small letter instead of a capital, and he invariably put *i* for I. The style of his hand-writing was unlike anything in heaven above, or the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth, and his manner of speaking was harsh and jolty, like a waggon without springs over a rough and stony road. Then, too, his person was anything but winning, and his voice was utterly unmusical, and apparently full of discords with itself. Yet this man, with all his disadvantages, was the means of turning thousands from sin, and he now no doubt shines as a star of no common magnitude in heaven.

Thrown an orphan upon the world at fifteen, he sought a home, and found it in his uncle's family in Western Pennsylvania. There in a log cabin Sunday school he learned to read a little, and was converted.

In the freshness of his earliest experience of the grace of God he began telling what the Lord had done for him, and how it was done. The story, though rudely told, was an interesting one in itself, and his sincerity was so manifest that no one doubted a word he said. People listened to him whenever he told it, whether to one alone, or to any little circle in the cabins of the neighbours, or in the school-house meetings. And he was cheered on by several instances in which the Lord sealed his testimony by that of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who heard him.

From the first he seemed so deeply conscious of his own weakness that he went for wisdom and strength to the Lord himself, and that kept him fresh and full. And very soon the circle of his experimental knowledge of the truth became enlarged, and he would tell how this and that word of Scripture had been brought home to him, and how valuable it had become.

He used to say: "You kin read and write, but you know I can't read well at all. I hev to speak out my words, and I don't know how to write. I never writ a letter to know it in my life, tho' I do mean to learn. Maybe if I knowed mor'n I du,

shouldn't feel the need uv prayin' es I du now, but I know so little that I feel all the time es ef I must go to God to tell me what this and that means. And He alluz tells me in my heart, fust or last. Ef He don't tell me right away, I keep on askin' jest like the widow who went to the onjest jedge, and afore long He's sure to tell me."

In this way, by delving at the Scriptures, one verse spelled out at a time, and written with the finger of God on his heart in answer to his importunity, he had a continual feast, and was always fresh and full whenever opportunity offered to put in his testimony for the Lord.

This continued for several years, until he married a good young woman, whom he had first led to Christ, and went out into another county to open up a farm in the forest for himself. Here his religious experience was still further deepened, and the circle of his usefulness enlarged by means of a Sunday school formed and superintended by himself. The undertaking was a great one for a man of his limited capacity and culture, and he knew it.

When asked how he dared to try it, his answer was, " Oh, it wus a'most tu much sartin sure; and I wus scart at fust tu think uv it at all. But ye see I couldn't bear to think uv all the chillen and their fathers and mothers, and no Sunday school at all, nor any meetin, and the chillen all a growin up jest like leetle savages. And so I told the Lord about it, and told Him ef ther wus'nt anybody else 't would

du, why then tu take me. Like Isaiah, I said, H am I, Lord, send me. And then, when the sch wus wunst agoin, then I went tu Him, and told H everything about it, and told Him jest how ignor I wus, and 'what a poor weak critter I wus, & asked Him to help me, and He did help me ev time."

"Well, what good did your school do?" "Oh, it a heap o' good I kin tell ye. Fur a while I thoug it wusn't doin' much, and I wus cast down and i purty bad. And then I went and told the Lord about it, and jest how bad I felt, cos arter all it seem jest es ef the devil would get all the chil and their fathers and mothers tu. Then ye see Sunday as I wus talkin' tu 'em, the Lord He co right down amongst us by His Sperit, and ever many uv 'em begun to cry and take on.

"Well, du you believe, that was the beginnin' the fust revival I ever see? And oh, what a time wus! We sent, and got a minister to come a preach to us, after we had fust told the Lord about it, and asked Him to send us one like David man after His own heart. And in the eend uv t revival—though I don't think it ever ought to ha come to an eend, as it did, at all—a church v formed, and the minister wus hired to stay, and and by we built a nice meetin' house, and then hed another revival tu."

It would seem that the next stage of his advancement and preparation for still greater usefulness

was occasioned by the death of his wife, to whom he was most tenderly attached, and who had proved a true helpmeet to him. This was a great shadow upon his path; all looked dark around him and before him. He was left with two young children; and when he looked on them he says it seemed as if his heart would break. But let us listen to his own account. He said—

“Es my wife wus lyin’ dead in my cabin, the minister he come in, and says he, es he wus a comin’ in, says he, ‘The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away,’ says he; ‘blessed be the name of the Lord!’ And says I, Brother Reed, how kin you say that? The Lord gave me my wife, I know, for I asked Him for her twice’t, and He gave her tu me twice’t, fust es my child, and then es my wife; but how kin you think the Lord hes taken her away and left me and the leetle ones here alone? So he talked tu me a good deal, but it didn’t seem to du me much good to speak uv. But that night, on my bed, I told the Lord all about it, how I felt, and asked Him to tell me how I ought tu feel, and purty soon it seemed to come right down tu me from heaven what the ‘postle Paul said about its bein’ better to depart and be with Christ, and what Christ hisself said, ‘I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself.’ Then it come acrost me jest es ef my dear wife in heaven had spoke tu me herself, and said, ‘Don’t mourn for

me, I'm in glory! I'm with Jesus! I'm better of than ever I could be on airth; don't mourn for me!

"And then she seemed to say tu me, 'T—— don't be afeard about the chillen, the Lord will take care uv 'em, and keep 'em. Don't be afeard for 'em the Lord loves 'em better'n you or I.'

"So I was comforted some'ut; but then ye see I wus so lonesome like, and the world did look so awful dreary tu me, and it did seem es ef the days wus so awful long, and the nights tu; and tu look ahead for ten, twenty, forty, maybe fifty years tu come, and I all alone, and my wife up in heaven, oh! it was terrible, and it grew wus and wus, ontill at last I thought what a fool I am! Me here, T—— K—— to go round with sich a load on to me, and so long tu, and never go and tell the Lord about it, and ask Him to tell me how to git red uv it! So I went and told Him all about it, and I asked Him to tell me what tu du, and what du you think He told me? He told me that He would be to me more than my wife hec been. And how du you think he told me? Why, he brought to my mind the words of the prophet, *Thy Maker shall be thy husband*, and oh, what a comfort it wus tu me, 'Thy Maker shall be thy husband!' Yes, the Lord would be to me what I hed ben to my wife. He loved me jest as much, yes, and a good deal more'n, I hed ever loved my wife. And du you believe, all'us after that, the Lord seemed nearer tu me'n ever He did afore, and I couldn't help tellin' everybody about it, my heart wus so full. From

that time to this, His salvation has been nigh to me in every time of trouble, just as David said, and I have never felt lonesome any more, never!"

His next great refreshing and advance came in this way. He sold his farm, invested his money safely, and arranged to have the income from it paid for the tuition of his children. His sister, who lived in Northern Ohio, where there was an excellent school, gladly took the children and sent them to school. He sold all his personal property also, except a favourite horse and good strong one-horse wagon, and purchased books and tracts, and started out on his own account to see what he could do in the border settlements and embryo villages and cities of the west. He was successful in forming a number of Sunday-schools, besides selling and distributing a great many books and tracts; and he never entered the doors of any habitation, scarcely, where his presence was not, in itself, like the Christian salutation, Peace to this house, nor left it without leaving a blessing there, in virtue of his remembered influence and words.

At last, one evening he was welcomed to the hospitalities of a man who had been a loud and open talker against Christians and the cause of Christ. This man's children, it seems, took a fancy to the farmer-missionary and his books, and besought their father to go after him and bring him back to stay over Sunday with them, and he did so.

The immediate result was very striking. In the

course of the evening the man came out upon the missionary, much to the mortification of the children and their mother; and the missionary, very faithfully, but very kindly, turned the tables upon him. He asked him whether he had always felt as he did then, and whether his mother believed as he did, and how it had been with his forefathers?

The mention of his mother touched him deeply, and he began telling how she had lived and died, and what she had said in her dying-hour, and before he was aware of it the tell-tale tears were coursing down his cheeks, and when he wiped them away, he said: "Well, well, never mind; we shall all know more about these things when we come to die."

Then the missionary told him he could know about them now.

"You don't pretend to tell me that you know about things beyond the grave? You ha'nt been there have you?" "No, I ha'nt; but if you'll listen, I'll tell you somethin' that I du know." So he began in his usual way, with his testimony for Jesus, poured forth from a heart overflowing with the love of Christ and desire for this man's salvation; and when he ended, the man was silent. Then he, with the assent of his host, prayed most fervently for him, his wife and children, and their neighbours and neighbour's children. And they all retired.

Sunday, besides the meeting at the school-house according to his custom in every place to form a Sunday-school, he proposed a prayer-meeting, and a

the appointed hour the people came. The missionary, after opening the meeting—he had learned by this time to read certain portions of the Bible, and many hymns, without having to spell any of the words; indeed he knew by heart whole chapters and almost whole books, as well as a great many psalms and hymns—gave opportunity for any present who had anything to say to say it, and, to the alarm of many, the man who had received him as his guest slowly rose, and began by saying, “Last night I spent a sleepless night. Our friend, the Sunday-school man,” for so they called him, “and I had a talk last evening, and what he said kept ringing in my ears all night long; and then, too, he brought up about my mother, and what she said in her dying-hour kept ringing in my ears more’n all the rest, and I tumbled and tossed about, and disturbed my wife, and she asked me what the matter was, and I told her, and then she proposed that we should git up and pray. And we got up, lit the candle, got out the Bible, which hasn’t been read much in my house, and I read a chapter, and we knelt down, and I tried to pray, but I made purty poor work of it, I can tell ye. Howsomever it was a beginning, and now I want to know something about this religion for myself that this man tells about, and that my old mother used to tell about. If any of you can pray, pray for me.”

Simple as this talk was, it was like a moral earthquake in that house and place.

Now, without following further the steps in detail,

it is sufficient to say that this was the beginning of a revival in which every family within the radius of miles around was blessed in measure, greater or less. And it was the beginning of a new era in the work of the missionary, for thenceforth he could no longer be content with the planting of a Sunday-school, the sale of a few books, and gifts of tracts, with such incidental good as he could do by a passing testimony for the blessed Jesus; but he looked in every place whither the Lord directed his steps to see a revival of the work of God, and so prayed and laboured for it as never to leave without either having his desires fulfilled, or meeting such decisive evidences against it as satisfied him that further trial would be in vain.

Very many bordervillages and secluded settlements, where the Gospel had not been carried by any minister, were thus visited by the saving power of God; and many others, where ministers had laboured long without signal fruits, were abundantly blessed with precious harvest-seasons. And he would be a bold man who should attempt to count the numbers who, in these various places, had been led to Christ as a consequence of his voluntary missionary visits. Finally, he became so full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, that he seemed always and everywhere to have power, and to prevail with God and man. In one instance he went into a settlement in Northern Ohio, where they refused him hospitality, and rebuffed him

peremptorily. Night had overtaken him, a Saturday night too it was ; and he took shelter at a little inn, and then went to the school-house in the dark, taking with him a candle and a match to light it, for a place to pray. And whilst at prayer, strongly drawn out for the place and people, some one passing saw the light and looked in. Soon he was bowed by the side of the missionary, and was praying for himself, and came out of the house very deeply impressed indeed.

The missionary, it seems, from his own account, had told the Lord all about the matter, and had been told in turn, to his own satisfaction, that the Lord had much people there. So he asked this young man to give notice of a meeting there to be held by him at 11 o'clock A.M., which he did in a manner so thorough that the house was well nigh full of people at the appointed time ; and the power of God was so displayed, that from that hour everybody understood that a great and glorious work was in progress.

At last this humble man's signal power in prayer became so well known that he was sent for by one whose ministry was attended by vast crowds of people, to aid him in his work, from city to city, and town to town, and everywhere his prayers were answered in a manner so marked as to turn all eyes to God, from the preacher, and induce all men to glorify God, not man, for what was wrought.

And thus was the measure of this man filled up. From step to step he rose in always fresh, because always refreshed, advancing, because always strengthened with the inner man, that Christ might dwell in him, be unfolded more and more to his apprehensions.

CHAPTER V.

LOYALTY.

"Thy kingdom come."

PROPHETS foretold the coming of a kingdom which should abide for ever. John the Baptist, as herald of the King, announced it as at hand. The disciples of Jesus, going forth at His command, proclaimed to all that the kingdom had come nigh unto them. And as all men mused upon what it should be, and how it should come, Jesus himself answered, "Say not, Lo here! or, Lo there! for the kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation; it is within you." The poet sings,—and we join lustily in the stirring strain,—

"All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall:
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all."

Are we then truly loyal? We mean to be, and think we are, but are we? What is true loyalty?

That can best be told when we have clearly defined the realm of Christ.

The key to the realm of Christ lies in His own declaration about the kingdom, that it is within us.

A kingdom within means a King within. Christ's kingdom is no abstraction, but a real kingdom, having a real King; and where the kingdom is, there the King is who reigns in it. And a King enthroned within has man for his realm, soul, body, and all that concerns him.

Human government is over man, not within him. It can forbid a man to steal, but it cannot prohibit him from coveting; it can punish murder, but it cannot touch the hater; it has no control of his thoughts and feelings at all, but has to do with his outward acts alone. And it has nothing to do with a man's affairs either, so long as they do not injuriously affect the interests of others, public or private.

The old theocracy under Moses went farther, and prohibited not only wrong actions, but wrong thoughts and feelings; and it regulated all relations of life—personal, domestic, social, political, and religious; yet only as an external government; and any external government, however good it may be, and however far it may reach—whilst it may spread the wing of its protection over “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” and be a “terror to evil doers,” and may even prohibit wrong thoughts and feelings—has no power to enact virtue in the heart or decree knowledge in the head. But this is precisely what Christ does as King within. His kingdom is not over men as a law and terror, but in them as a power and joy. He does enact righteousness in their hearts; He does decree knowledge in their

souls. He takes the evil-doer, and transforms him into the virtuous man. He grapples with a Jacob the supplanter, and converts him into Israel the prince, who has power, and prevails with God and man ; he enters a Saul of Tarsus, whose very breath is violence, threatening, slaughter, and changes him into Paul the apostle, whose whole soul burns with love ; He penetrates and possesses the soul of an Augustine in his sensuality and superstitious, vain philosophisings, and turns him into a pure, solid, mighty reformer.

The old theocracy does more than human governments, but less than the new. It grapples with the hearts and consciences of men, by its law over them, and brings them into condemnation ; but it cannot set them free. It makes them feel the weight of the body of sin to which they are bound, but brings them no deliverance. It shows them that they are dead, but has no power to make them alive. It makes them cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me ?" but it cannot make them exclaim, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, there is, therefore, now no condemnation."

But the new theocracy, not over us, but within, not only grapples with the heart, but enters into it with conquering power, and there sets up its throne, and with the utmost joy crowns the King, and sets the prisoner free, and fills all the realm with peace and light.

The first great act of true loyalty, therefore, is the

reception of Christ Himself as King within. It is to open the heart to Him, and bid Him enter ; to throw wide the gates, and hail Him as King upon His throne in the heart of hearts and soul of souls.

This is why Christ himself says, " Behold, I stand at the door and knock ; and if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in ; " for He stands ready and waiting at the door of every heart where He is not already enthroned, to enter in, take the throne, enact His laws, publish His truth, rule in every thought and feeling, plan and purpose, and fill and feast the soul with grace and truth.

This, too, is one of the great and blessed realities offered in the proclamation of the Psalmist, applicable as it is, finally and on the grandest scale, to the entrance of Christ into His consummated kingdom—

" Lift up your heads, O ye gates !
And be ye lift up ye everlasting doors !
And the King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory ?
The Lord, strong and mighty ;
The Lord, mighty in battle ;
The Lord of hosts,
He is the King of glory."

For as a conqueror He enters the heart the instant the gates are opened ; and as a King He takes His throne and sets up His kingdom, which is righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost.

Our loyalty is too apt to have this defect, that it accepts of Jesus as a King in heaven, but not here in the heart, and gives Him the tribute of fear and

forced obedience—a tribute of duty more than love, and of dread more than praise. The man whose ideal of the Christian is Paul, the wretched man, chained to the body of this death, knows nothing of the glad loyalty of him whose own experience is like that of Paul the exultant man, giving thanks to God for deliverance. So much for the inner realm of the kingdom, and for the loyalty it demands. Now for the outer, the realm of life, and its affairs.

The distinction prevalent between what belongs to God and what belongs to Cæsar, what belongs to religion and what to business, what to the Church and what to politics,—in short, what is sacred and what is secular,—is wholly unknown to our King and His kingdom.

Sacred ! secular ! Who made the distinction ? Not our King, for it robs Him of six-sevenths of His kingdom. Where is it to be found ? Not in the Word of God. Search it from end to end, and you will search in vain for it ; and what is more, if it were there, it would rob the Bible of its glory ! What in its records of answered prayer shines with greatest lustre ? What, but such as those of Jacob in reference to the safety and prosperity of himself and family ? and of Abraham in reference to the destruction of the cities of the plain ? and those of Gideon in reference to his great campaign against the Midianitish host ? and those of David for deliverances and victories ? and those of Mordecai for the safety of Queen Esther, and the rescue of the Israelites from the plot

of Haman? and those of Daniel in reference to the affairs of the empire in which he held high office, and of successive empires which were to arise thereafter? and of the disciples in behalf of Peter in the prison?

What are the names brightest on the roll of the kingdom but Abraham the shepherd, Joseph the governor, Moses the lawgiver, Joshua the soldier, David the king, Daniel the judge, and the like?

And the various callings and occupations: who made one sacred and another secular? What is secular? Is the healing art? Then Christ was in a secular line for He went about healing all manner of diseases. Is the business of providing sustenance secular? Then Christ was doing secular work in feeding the five thousand and the four thousand in the wilderness and in providing manna from heaven, and water from the rock during all the years of Israel's wanderings. And our heavenly Father has been engaged in secular affairs ever since the world was made, and in making it, in giving us our daily bread by our yearly harvests and by every living thing, and all fruits given us for food. Is the military a secular line? Then more than one Bible-hero has been purely secular in God-given work. Is statesmanship secular? Then the life-work of Joseph and Daniel was secular. O wretched distinction! would that it could be sent back whence it came!

No, no; the realm of Christ our King, the outer realm, embraces every line of life and every interest of man.

And true loyalty recognises this as true, and joyously accepts it.

No man really loyal to Christ takes upon himself to be a minister unless called of God. No more has he the right to take upon himself, uncalled of God, to be a merchant, a physician, a surgeon, a farmer, an artisan, or anything else in the whole circle of human callings. How does he know, if he thrust himself into any profession uncalled, but what he is running counter to God's plan for him?

We should see the disloyalty of any one who, like the prophet Jonah, if called to be a minister, should insist upon being a merchant; and should expect nothing else but a storm-tossed career for him until he should abandon his self-willed course, and accept the calling marked out for him of God. And we should see the folly and madness of any one not called to minister at the altar who should assume the calling, and that not merely because it might spoil a good farmer, or physician, or mechanic, or something else, to make a poor minister, but because it would be running counter to the plan of God for him.

True loyalty recognises that Christ, our King, has a plan for every man and a plan for every work, and makes it a first duty and a great privilege to find out His plan, and then pursue it.

Moses was as truly called to be a lawgiver in Israel as Aaron was to be a priest, and Bezaleel was designated artisan of the tabernacle as distinctly as Solomon was founder of the temple.

Christ has founded a theocracy, which consists, first, of each man in whom He is enthroned as King, and last, in the grand consummated kingdom of the future. And He has a place in it for everyone of us, as He had a place for every tribe in Israel, and for every man, from Moses down. We are living stones in His living temple; and it would not do for the window-sill to say, I will be a door-post, or for the top-stone to say, I will be the head of the corner. We are His body, and members in particular; and it is not for the hand to say, I will be the foot, or the eye to say, I will be the ear.

No, no! Christ is King in His own kingdom, and it is the prerogative of His sovereignty to appoint every man his calling, and give every man his daily work and daily orders.

He is a King within, and it is the very genius of His sovereignty to rule in every place, and choice, and work of life. And it is the very nature of true loyalty to look to Him to do it.

CHAPTER VI.

SERVICE.

"One is your Master, even Christ."—MATT. xxiii. 8.

WE may say loyalty to Christ, in the choice of his line of life, and in his daily pursuits and plans, very beautiful in theory, but how about it in practice? Brought to the touchstone of real life, will it stand? Would it not be an awful bondage? Could it be endured?

And if it could be endured, would it be possible? How could the will of God our Saviour be ascertained? How could one know that it was His choice that we should select any one calling rather than another? And how could His plans for us in our work from day to day be ascertained?

And if it were both endurable and possible, would not be fatal? Would it not give the men of the world, in their unscrupulousness, vastly the advantage? And would we not sink and fall in the race competition?

As to the question of bondage, true loyalty, from the nature of the case, is not a bondage, but is perfect freedom.

The kingdom is within, and therefore the loyalty

is spontaneous. When we open the door to Christ He enters in and sets up His throne in the heart ; not as a censor, but a Saviour ; not to upbraid, but to cleanse ; not to bind in legal bondage, but to set at liberty ; not to load with duties, but to make every duty a delight ; not to lash the conscience for past offences, or spur the will to vows and struggles, to sleepless vigils and tireless effort ; but to take all the responsibility on Himself as the new Creator of the soul in the image of God ; not to put the man upon the rack and stretch of agonising effort, but to give him rest from it in every form, through faith in Christ himself ; not to demand anything at all, but to give everything ; not to exact of him holiness in heart and life, but to create it in him ; in short, to set up in the soul His kingdom, which is righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost.

In establishing the old theocracy, Christ came as the Lawgiver and enthroned Himself amidst the awful sublimities of Sinai, and proclaimed His government over men, and gave rules of life in everything.

In the new, He came in our nature as a Sin-bearer, a Conqueror, and King, and sets up His throne amidst the greater sublimities of man's moral nature ; and there He rules in creative power, to strike off every chain, set us free, and mould our very thoughts, intents, desires, into harmony with His own. He comes in, enthrones Himself, calls a congress or parliament of all the faculties, lays before it the questions of allegiance, whether it shall be given to Him or not ;

and the motive, whether it shall be love or selfishness; and when they are weighed, the right clearly seen, the cost fairly counted, and the debate concluded, He puts the question, and gains the decision by a hearty concurrence of the entire voluntary nature.

And that is not all; if it were, it would be much, but not enough, the involuntary powers might still be in rebellion—the tastes, the affections, the impulses might be all on the wrong side, and kept under only by the iron hand of a dominant determination and a sleepless vigilance. But, thanks be to God, that is not all; Christ comes in as Lord and King in all His majestic sweetness, and unfolds His glories to the soul, and captivates it for Himself: it falls in love, and is enraptured, insomuch that its tastes, affections, impulses, all are converted, new created, and go out to Him with the greatest delight, and so He carries the involuntary with the voluntary powers, all for and with Himself. How then could His service be a bondage?

The idea of its being a bondage comes from a false conception of Christ's kingdom in its very nature. Our term religion is from *religio*, to bind; and the false idea which makes the service of Christ appear to be a bondage is this, that it binds one to onerous duties; but the true idea is, that it binds one to Christ: the false idea is, that Christ is an inexorable master, and His service is task-work, enforced by the lash of conscience, however reluctant the heart may

be ; the true is, that Christ as King within renews the heart, and fills it with delight in Him and in His will : the false idea is, that He is a ruler over us, enforcing His will mainly through a sense of our responsibility ; but the true is that He comes in as Prince of Peace, and brings in, also, His Father as our Father, full of love, and blots out our sins, strikes off our bonds, opens our prison doors, sets us free, makes His service our chiefest joy, and fills us with all the fulness of God.

As to the question of possibility, the service of Christ in any and every line of life is not only possible, but nothing can be easier.

In the first place, it is easy to know His will, and then it is easy to do it. Taking first the point as established, that the kingdom is a fact, not a fiction, and is within, not merely over us, any thoughtful man must see that nothing can be easier than the submission and decision of all questions. Christ is not afar off, but near ; not up in heaven, but here in the soul. Access is easy : He is not fenced about with courtiers and ceremonies, times and seasons, but approachable at any moment anywhere. His council, too, is at hand : He can quickly summon the powers within to deliberate and decide ; and if there be an honest, earnest desire to know His will, it will soon be ascertained.

True, there is an adversary, and there are strong illusions and subtle temptations. The serpent is still the most subtile of all the beasts, and knows

well how to present forbidden fruit as beautiful to the eye, desirable to make one wise, and good for food ; but there is also a word of God to test his illusions and temptations by, and if the heart be right, the judgment, enlightened by the Word, will weigh truly and decide aright in every case.

Then, too, there is the providence of our King, through which He speaks ; and if in anything we are perplexed to know His will, it can be submitted to His providence for decision. He opens, and no man shuts ; and He shuts, and no man opens. If He shuts one door, we know that is not the one He would have us enter. If He opens another, we gather assuredly that He would have us take it. When He shuts up to us all doors but one, and opens that, we know that to be the one for us. When He opens two or more, we take the one which seems most in accordance with His will, and if it be so, His providence leads us on, or if not, it hedges up our way and turns us. No one with an honest heart in a sound mind can remain long in ignorance of the will of God in anything that He would have him do.

Having ascertained the will of God, it will not only be possible to do it, but easy and delightful.

There are no impossibilities with God. There are no impossibilities in doing the will of God. It seemed an impossibility to Israel to go through the Red Sea, but it was very easy. They thought, too, that they should die in the wilderness for want of bread, and meat, and water, but they never before

nor afterwards obtained either of them half so easy, So with anything that God commands : it is not only practicable, but is easier than many things which we count amongst the easiest of all.

Nay more, there is a power in the knowledge that one is in the line of God's will that is cheering beyond every other motive. The Napoleonic inspiration concerning one's-self, that he is a child of destiny, is cold, poor, empty, in comparison with the Christian's realization that he is, in the heart, and plans, and purposes of his loving Saviour for him. The mechanic, with the plan of the architect before him, or with his daily work marked out for him, goes cheerfully on, well knowing that what he does is his fitting part of the great whole, which, when completed, will be the palace of his king. The Christian soldier under orders fulfils his duties with the utmost confidence that he is doing the best thing possible toward the final triumph of the kingdom, because it is the part assigned him by the King. O what a cheering, invigorating power there is in this to bear one up in the daily pressure of any calling ! He who has really taken the line of life marked out for him, and knows it, and who really casts the burden of his daily business, as well as of his daily bread, upon his loving God, has learned a secret which will bear him up whilst others sink, and sustain him under pressure that otherwise would crush him to the earth.

Fatal to success ? Yes, when Divine wisdom be-

comes folly, and Divine strength weakness, but not before. Fatal to success? No, not whilst the throne of God shall stand. If the kingdom is real, if Christ reigns as King in providence, and King in the heart, then it is fatal not to be in His plans.

Some men are in His plans for them; but they do not know it. They succeed, Napoleon-like, just so far as they are in His purposes for them; albeit they know it not; and the moment they strike out across the line He has marked, they fail and fall.

Some have been in His plans, and have known it, David-like, and have been prospered so long as they continued in them; but when, through prosperity, they were lifted up to pride, or carelessness, and forgot to keep step in the march with Christ, they have stumbled and fallen; and if it has not been fatal to them, it was because He himself stooped to pick them up, set them on their feet, and put them again into the pathway of His plans for them.

Why is it that any should think it fatal to follow Christ daily in any walk of life? Is it because they think He has nothing to do with our affairs?—that religion is one thing, and business quite another?—that worship belongs to God, and everything else to us?—that Sunday is the Lord's day, and every other day is man's?

This idea has already been considered, and found absurd.

Is it because they think religion binds a man hand and foot, so that he cannot succeed,—unfits

him, by making him acerb, ascetic, gloomy? This, too, we have glanced at, and seen to be contrary to the very nature and genius of the Gospel.

Is it because they think that the tendency of religion is to lift one up above the world into a state ecstatic and absorbed, a sort of life-long trance, wherein one hardly knows whether he is in the body or out of the body, a kind of continual Mount-of-Transfiguration or Isle-of-Patmos state, in which he is totally unfitted for practical affairs?

It is to be regretted that too much countenance has been given to this idea by the teachings of great and good men. Yet it is utterly groundless.

One of our sweetest Christian poets has unwittingly sent this idea forth upon the silvery wings of very charming verse. He sings of the rod, in its power to try our faith and bring to light, and perfect it in its exceeding preciousness, and says—

“Riper and riper now,
Each hour let me become,
Less fit for scenes below,
More fit for such a home.”

Surely that word,

“*Less* fit for scenes below,”

must have been a slip of the pen or mistake of the type! Surely one who knows so much, and sings so sweetly of Jesus in these scenes below, cannot think that this unfits *him* for his place and work! What then was it that Jesus meant when He taught us to pray, “Thy will be done in earth as it is done in

heaven?" And how then was it that David, under the rod, when he hid himself in God, and was brought back from his wanderings, and filled with the fulness of God, was fitted by it more for his duties as king—not less? And how was it that Paul in chains, and in the land of Beulah, with the light of the Eternal City shining down upon him, was fitted to bear testimony before kings and in Cæsar's household, as he had before witnessed in synagogues and halls?

And how is it that Jesus says, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you?" And how was it that Christ Himself, who, whilst on earth was in heaven, was better fitted for heaven than any other one who was ever on the earth, and better fitted for the scenes on earth than any other one who ever went to heaven? Is it not a great and grievous mistake to suppose that the kingdom of God within unfits one for any line of life on earth to which the King calls him?

Is it not entirely safe to say that the more perfectly any man is in the plans of God for him, and the more fully he has God within him to direct, instruct, and help him, the better man he will be for his work be that what it may?

Would not the best merchant, banker, broker, artisan, doctor, lawyer, teacher, farmer, who is not a Christian, or who, being a Christian, holds his religion as the Lord's and his business as his own, be better still in his line of life if he leaned hard upon the arm

of the Lord for plans, guidance, wisdom, and strength every day and all the time?

If not, then our religion is a vain shadow, and the Scriptures, old and new, are but myths.

Thank God it is not so; the kingdom is a divine reality, the presence of God in us is a glorious verity, the guidance of God and the help of God in all our affairs will never fail us if we put our trust in Him.

CHAPTER VII.

WISDOM UNASKED.

"But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption : That according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."—1 COR. i. 30, 31.

ALL our resources are in Christ Jesus—hidden at the first, and developed by degrees. The great resource for successful work, least apprehended, but not the least necessary, which we have in Jesus, is wisdom. We may clearly apprehend Him as our spotless representative, and thus our perfect righteousness. We may see also, as it is written, that we all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord, and so accept Him as our sanctification. And our progress has been small indeed if we do not behold the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world, and accept His death as our priceless ransom-price, and see thus in Jesus our complete redemption. All this we may clearly apprehend, and yet fail entirely to understand the resource of wisdom hidden in Jesus for us. Happy are we, thrice happy, if we do not

fail to apprehend it. And yet it is very distinctly made known, and very plainly shown in the written revelation, and may be stated in these few words:—

JESUS WITH US AS OUR COUNSELLOR.

One of the grand prophecies concerning the offices and character of Christ, condensed by the prophet Isaiah to a name, is this, He shall be called *Wonderful, Counsellor*; and accompanying the great commission our Saviour has given us this wonderful assurance, wonderful indeed if we accept it in its fulness and understand it in all its value, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end.”

Already we have seen that in this we have the promise of His presence as our King; so also have we of His being always with us as our All-wise Counsellor.

If we ask how He is present with us? the answer is, By His Spirit. As in our sanctification, it is by the Spirit of the Lord that we, with open face, behold in Jesus the glory of the Lord, and so are changed into the same image; so it is by the Spirit of the Lord we behold the son of God, our righteousness, and the Lamb of God, our redemption, and also the living, ever-present Jesus, our King and Counsellor.

Here let us guard against a mistake, alas! too often made. Let us bear in mind that the seat of wisdom is the judgment; and if counsel comes from Him who framed the soul of man, it comes to and

through the judgment, not the feelings. Too many will not hear His counsel, and believe it to be divine, because they do not feel; and others accept impressions as from the Lord, without weighing them in the scales of written revelation held in the hand of judgment, and they pray over them, and deepen them all the time, when, if they should exercise judgment, enlightened by the Word of God, they would soon see that their cherished impressions were not from the Lord at all, but from a source entirely opposite. Let us bear two things in mind: First our All-wise Counsellor never gives counsel inconsistent with His own written precepts and principles; and second, He always counsels wisdom, not folly,—sense, not nonsense; in other words, Jesus is made of God unto us wisdom, not foolishness.

The counsel given by our Saviour is supernatural, divine. All wisdom is, of course, from God. Some men are wiser by nature than others; and wisdom, as a natural endowment, may be cultivated and increased, without limit, by exercise; but wisdom, as a natural gift, cultivated though it be to its very utmost, is one thing, and wisdom bestowed by the counsels of the living God, our Saviour, is another thing entirely.

True, the supernatural may work through the natural, and quicken it, and cause it to grow strong, and it does do this.

Christ, who created the human mind, does nothing to supersede its action, or take away its responsi-

bility, but everything to induce normal action, and to put us upon our own responsibility. Jesus Himself is wise, He is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working, and as our Teacher, He stimulates us to think, and judge, and act. He does not do up our thinking and judging for us, and put the thoughts and judgments all formed into our minds. He helps us to help ourselves, and so strengthens instead of weakening us by His aid. As little children, He gives us the helping hand by which to lift ourselves upon our feet, and the steadying hand to keep us from falling, until we learn to go alone, and at every step encourages and cheers us on, and by every means draws us forward. Nevertheless His counsel is as real and as really supernatural as if it superseded our own judgment entirely, instead of stimulating it to healthful, vigorous action, as it does.

The breadth embraced in the counsels of Jesus is commensurate with the breadth of His kingdom. Both include every legitimate interest and occupation of life. Man, the whole of man, in every province of his being, soul, and body, belongs to Christ as His realm; and there can be nothing that concerns man which does not concern Christ as his king. Choose what line of life he may, he is still under the rightful sway of Jesus. He may be a military man, like David or Saul, Cyrus or Alexander, Napoleon or any other of the world's great captains, but his profession does not remove him from under the kingship of Christ. He may be a merchant prince

or banker, or an engineer, or lawyer, a physician or farmer, an artist or an artisan, a teacher or anything whatever in the whole circle of human occupations ; yet in any of them all he is under the rule of our King, and so also is he within the circle of His counsels.

The counsels of Jesus are bestowed in many cases, and sometimes in the most wonderful manner, unasked of Him, and even upon those who do not know Him. We have a remarkable example of this in Cyrus, king of Persia. Whence came the wisdom of his youth, which made him rise superior to the temptations of royal wealth and boundless luxury in the courts of his father and his uncle, and gave him excellence in all manly sports and military art and science ? From whom did he receive such counsels as enabled him to overcome in every campaign and every battle ? Who opened for him, through his own wise strategy, the two-leaved gates of brass, and admitted him into Babylon the great, and into the palace of Belshazzar, whilst he was feasting securely, and drinking wine boastfully and blasphemously out of vessels his father had taken from God's temple at Jerusalem ?

Let the Word of the Lord by Isaiah the prophet, put upon record scores and scores of years before the Persian monarch was born, answer the question.

"Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him ; and I will loose the loins of kings" (as

He made the every joint in Belshazzar's body to tremble and shake, almost to fall apart), "to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and will give thee the treasures of darkness, and the riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me . . . I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let my captives go, not for price nor reward saith the Lord of hosts."

King David, unlike Cyrus, knew from whence his resistless skill as a warrior came, for he says of the Lord—

"He teacheth my hands to war,
So that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms."

And again—

"Blessed be the Lord my strength,
Which teacheth me to war,
And my fingers to fight;
My goodness and my fortress;
My high tower and my deliverer;
My shield in whom I trust;
Who subdueth my people under me."
(Teacheth me to control and command them).

David doubtless asked wisdom for his position

and therefore knew from whence it came, but Cyrus did not. Yet the Lord was with him to counsel his movements, and give him wisdom to fulfil unwittingly the high purposes for which he was raised up. And although it may not be possible to mark the line between them, we know from the inspired prophecy concerning Cyrus, that however great his native genius for military affairs and statesmanship, there were also superadded supernatural influences without which all his natural endowments would have failed.

Possibly, if we knew as much about Napoleon, the same could be said of him, and perhaps even more, viz., that when finally he abandoned the right, his unknown Counsellor abandoned him, and let him go into captivity and die. Something higher than human genius he himself recognised in himself although he knew not what it was, and so gave it the name of destiny.

And Alexander, even more than Napoleon, felt himself the subject of a kind of inspiration for his captaincy. Myterious to himself, and wholly supernatural, and therefore he always paid a superstitious reverence to every claimant of supernatural power or wisdom, whether it was an oracle of heathenism, or the true and living God.

CHAPTER VIII.

WISDOM ASKED OF GOD.

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."—
JAMES i. 5.

ONE of the most instructive examples of unasked wisdom given of God we have in the case of the skilful artisans to whom Moses committed the work of making the tabernacle, its furniture, curtains, and ornaments, and the breast-plate and garments of the high priest, according to the pattern shown him in the Mount. These artisans were not with Moses in the Mount, and therefore did not see the pattern shown to him, but worked out the things, without a pattern, from his description of what he had seen. And what makes it most remarkable is, that they wrought them out in all their details in the most perfect manner, in exact accordance with a pattern which they had not seen, by a wisdom which they had not asked.

We are left in no uncertainty as to how their wisdom came; the record is entirely clear and full. It is as follows:—

"And the Lord spake unto Moses" (after He had shown him the patterns of all), "saying, See, I have

called by name Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah ; and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones to set, and in carving of timber ; to work in all manner of workmanship.

“And I, behold I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan ; and in the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all I have commanded thee.”

This record lifts the veil of invisibility, and shows us that our ever-present all-wise Counsellor was with these artisans, leading them, all unconscious of his presence, into all He designed them to know and do.

In all probability, if we could have the curtain lifted in the same way from our eyes to see the minds of all the men who have worked out the ingenious things of modern convenience, and the beautiful things of modern elegance, and the grand things of modern progress,—the press, the engine, the spinning-jenny, the power-loom, the reaper, the sewing-machine, the telegraph, photography, and all besides,—we should see the same all-wise Counsellor with these modern Bezaleels and Aholiabs, counselling them, and leading them to understand and bring forth these things according to the patterns existing in His mind and heart before He transferred them to theirs.

And there is no telling, if the veil was also lifted from the secret springs of the wisdom of spiritual work and success, how much more we should see than the favoured workers do themselves, as due to the unseen, unknown, and therefore unacknowledged presence and unappreciated counsel of the blessed Saviour.

One thing is certain, all we ever do directly in furtherance of Christ's kingdom is done by the supernatural wisdom He bestows upon us: for without Christ, as He has distinctly told us, we can do nothing. We may indeed do many things without Him which he may overrule, as He overrules all things for good; but nothing we do, or ever can do, without Him, can effect anything directly for His cause. The kingdom of Christ is supernatural, that is, it is above nature; and none but the wisdom and power which are from above can either unfold the supernatural things of His kingdom, or cause them to be understood when they are unfolded.

Another thing is just as certain: place side by side the account of any great modern successful Christian work, with the ancient records, the Acts, or Ezra, Kings, Judges, Joshua, Exodus, or Genesis, and you cannot but be struck by the contrast, in one respect at least, which they present. The prominent feature in the one is the Ego of the workers, and of the others the Deus, as He to whom belongs the excellency of both the wisdom and the power displayed in the work.

Why this difference? Not surely because of any unwillingness on the part of modern workers, more than the ancient, to give to God the glory of His work. Not at all. But simply because they do not see it as the ancient workers did. Any one would be glad to acknowledge the divine presence and power as with him, if he only knew the fact. Cyrus, or Alexander, Napoleon, Watt, Arkwright, and all other famous chieftains in the world of power or wisdom, would have gloried in making known the fact that God was with them, if they themselves had known it; but they did not see it. So with our successful modern Christian workers; although in debt for every particle of the wisdom which has guided them, and of the power which has made their work successful, they do but partially apprehend his presence, and therefore do but partially declare it.

Now, we come to the great practical matter before us. If so much wisdom is given unsought, and therefore unknown, and unacknowledged as coming from our ever-present all-wise Counsellor, Jesus Christ, how much more would be given for the asking?

All Christ gives, because we ask it, is clear gain; it is just so much more than he would give unsought.

And He gives liberally without upbraiding. The assurance of this fact comes to us through the apostle James, who stood second only to Peter amongst the Original twelve, and whose eminence was due to his superhuman wisdom.

James was a wonderfully wise man, and no one

better knew whence His wisdom came than he, nor how it came to be bestowed.

The generosity, the bountifulness assured, is something to amaze one; there is no restriction as to persons, purposes, or fulness. Our own capacity or desires are the only limits of His liberality; so far He gives to the full, heaped up,—if we keep on asking,—pressed down, and running over; and He gives liberally, without upbraiding, even when, Peter-like, we may have sinned grievously against Him, and does not reproach us with our crimes; and He gives to us for every legitimate purpose under heaven. The most remarkable instance, in some respects, recorded for us in the Word of God, in which wisdom is given because of its being sought, is one in the line of governmental, commercial, and scientific things; it is that of

★ SOLOMON, ISRAEL'S MERCHANT KING.

You remember it well, no doubt. You remember the remarkable scene at Gibeah, where he asked wisdom to guide him as a king, and received divine assurance that he should have it. You remember too the pleasure expressed by Jehovah because Solomon asked wisdom to guide him for the good of his people, and did not ask long life, or great wealth and power for his own enjoyment how He promised him not only the wisdom asked but length of days, wealth, and renown besides. And you know how the promise was fulfilled.

There must have been to the young king himself something very touching and convincing in that first recorded test of his discernment, when the two women came to him in reference to the one child claimed by each as her own. The one had overlain her own child and smothered it to death, and then stolen from the other her living child whilst she was asleep, and left the dead one in its place. Both alike clamoured for the living child. Then Solomon, with the same superhuman wisdom which was seen always in Christ himself, commanded a sword to be brought, and the child divided, and given, half to the one and half to the other claimant. Appealing thus to the mother instinct, the truth was shown at once; for whilst the pretended mother was satisfied to have the child slain and divided, the real mother exclaimed against it and expostulated, beseeching the king to give it to the other, heartless though she was, rather than have it put to death.

The traditional incident of the flowers, whether true or not, deserves to be true, it is so like this of the mothers. You remember it. Artificial flowers, so perfect as to defy human discernment for their detection, were submitted to the king, and he at once placed them beside natural flowers of the same kind, not to compare them together, as might have been supposed, but to let the bees decide, which they did at once, under the infallible guidance of their instinct, by feeding upon the natural, and neglecting the artificial entirely.

That, however, in which King Solomon showed his superhuman wisdom most of all was the line of commerce.

Jerusalem, you know, is inland from the Mediterranean a day's journey, not easily accessible, and has no one of the advantages of position which have given scope for enterprise and facilities for the concentration of the world's commerce, in such instances as Tyre or Carthage, Venice or Holland, London or New York.


And yet King Solomon made Jerusalem, for one generation, the grand commercial centre of the world. He commanded the Indian trade and that of the islands of the sea, and also the European trade and that of Africa. The east and the west, north and south, land and sea, all poured in their wealth of merchandise and the precious metals to enrich him and his kingdom and capital. No other instance of the kind has ever happened in the world. And the wisdom by which this grand result was accomplished is as rare as the success achieved.

Tyre had ruled the sea, sitting as queen in the waters of the Mediterranean. Hiram was king of Tyre. Solomon entered into no rivalry with Hiram, but made affinity with him : induced him to build his ships and man them, as well as to hew his timber for the temple, and thus subsidised his rival, and soon made himself master of the world's commerce in his stead.

The wisdom asked of God by *Daniel the judge*

and *Joseph the governor*, so abundantly bestowed upon them in answer to their prayers, are instances, scarcely, if at all, less remarkable than that of Solomon. But upon these we cannot dwell. Read the account of them at your leisure.

These witnesses are enough to confirm the beautiful and boundless promise God has given us by the apostle James; and these examples, together with the promise, surely ought to encourage us to ask and receive, and to ask, nothing doubting; and ask, without fear that we are asking too much, or asking for wisdom in a sphere for which it has not been promised. If Solomon, in asking for wisdom as a king, received so much more than he asked, even wisdom to understand all the arts and sciences of his day, and to master the world of commerce for his capital and kingdom, and to charm the world by his sayings; and if Daniel, as a youthful Hebrew captive prince, could receive wisdom by asking it of God to raise him to the premiership of the successive Babylonian and Medo-Persian empires; and Joseph, the Hebrew slave and prisoner, to raise him to the chief executive position under the King of Egypt, surely we ought not to doubt the promise given through the apostle, that if *any of you lack wisdom* (in anything), let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not, *and it shall be given him*.



CHAPTER IX.

GROUNDLESS RESTRICTIONS.

“Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened?”—MIC. ii. 7.

THERE is no profession or calling in the world in which wisdom from above would not be gladly welcomed and greatly useful, if it could be received; nor is there any one for which it cannot be obtained, if rightly sought. Even such lines of business as are wholly wrong, form no exception to the rule; for if in these counsel is asked of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not, it will be given, and the business will, in accordance with the counsel, be at once abandoned for something better.

The artisan may ask and receive the wisdom by which to work out the problems of perfection in his line from the same all-wise Counsellor who put such wisdom in the heart of all the wise ones who wrought out the various work of the tabernacle according to a pattern they had never seen.

The man of military life may ask and receive the quickening power and guiding wisdom which will fit him perfectly for the position he will be called to fill in the same school in which Cyrus, David,

and Joshua, were instructed and trained for the work allotted them.

The merchant may learn from the great merchant-king where and how to go for the wisdom which will enable him to succeed in the sphere before him.

The physician, more than all besides, needs the kind of insight into the cases he has to deal with, which Christ alone can give him, and none more than he can go with assurance for it, for he goes to the great Physician who, while Himself in the body on the earth, healed all who came to Him of whatsoever disease they had.

The lawyer and the statesman may well ask wisdom, Solomon-like, Daniel-like, Joseph-like, for their guidance in the intricacies and difficulties of law and justice, or the necessities of administration; and, like them, they will be sure to meet a ready response, and to obtain more than they ask.

There is something cruel and awful in the restrictions prevalent in regard to what and who may or may not go to the Saviour for wisdom in his calling. They shut out the very sunshine of life from the most of life itself. They separate between the soul and God in almost every engrossing occupation. They deny to man the help he needs from God in all the most pressing concerns and emergencies of his existence, except those alone which pertain immediately to salvation. They rob man of the best privilege God has given him in regard to the affairs of the present world, and they rob God of His oppor-

tunity to bless man and glorify Himself by answers to prayer in them.

Some idea of what is lost that might be gained may be conveyed by an incident in the settlement of a large estate.

THE LOST EVIDENCE.

An estate was left, consisting of lands, securities, and money. The heirs were numerous; most of them were widows and orphans, living three thousand miles away. An attorney undertook to settle the estate in their behalf. The land was divided by order of the court, and a large part of what belonged to the heirs who were of age was sold at public sale. The deeds were made out, signed, sealed, and ready for delivery. But a son of Belial, hoping to profit by making mischief, reported that the title was bad, that there were two children living on the Pacific coast who were entitled to the whole estate, and that those represented by the attorney were not the legal heirs at all. His report was, that a man who if he had been alive, would have been sole heir, had died, leaving two children who inherited all his rights. This report alarmed the purchasers, and caused them to refuse to take their deeds and pay for the lands lest all should be lost. They were unwilling to wait until evidence could be obtained from a distance so great, and the whole matter was at a dead lock.

What could the attorney do? The case was a hard one. If the sale should not be perfected, and th

reason should be made known, it would bring a cloud upon the title, however good, and depreciate the lands in value. The heirs, too, were in great need of the money. A villain had raised the doubt, and the innocent were to suffer by it. But how could it be helped? The attorney searched everywhere for letters and living witnesses, to prove that the report was false; but hearsay evidence was all that he could find. He was at his wits' end. For him, as a Christian man, one resource yet remained. He could carry the case to Christ, and ask His help and counsel in it. This he did, and there rested it, and awaited answer. Not many hours after he had done so, as he was upon his bed, the thought flashed upon him, that at a certain house, half a mile or more from his lodgings, where for a time a proprietor of the estate once lived, there might be found documentary proof in point; and next morning he called, and inquired. The answer was, that in the garret there was an old tin box full of papers. Quickly the box was brought down, and opened, and the first bundle untied contained abundant evidence of the facts, and restored entirely the lost confidence in the title.

The purchasers took their deeds, paid their money, and the innocent heirs were saved much damage.

Surely that attorney and the heirs he represented have reason to believe in the wonderful Counsellor. Have we not all good reason to believe in Him too?

Another example, in another line, may be well

THE MERCHANT AND HIS NOTES IN BANK.

A man who had been acting as agent in a certain house for an establishment in another city, was induced to purchase the stock-in-trade. He had not the capital to pay down, and might have declined the purchase, had it not been for inducement held out in the way of time for payment, to make it easy and of aid in various ways, to make the business profitable, enable him to pay his notes, and establish a sure house for himself.

After making the sale, the establishment of which this house had been a branch opened another house alongside of this which he had bought, and instead of assisting him, according to promise, the establishment bore down upon him by a heavy competition and, Shylock-like, demanded the fulfilment of his written obligations to pay, without the abatement of a dollar or the extension of a day. He was in peril of being driven to the wall. There was room only for one house, the weight of capital was all against him and what could he do? He must branch out in other lines to sustain himself, but had no capital to do it; yet do it he must, or fail, and this still increased his liabilities.


A heavy pressure came upon him, and a long struggle was before him for his very life as a business man. He was a Christian, and felt that the honour of the cause of Christ was as much at stake.

as was his own personal prosperity. To pay his notes at bank he adopted a novel plan.

He kept a sharp eye upon his bills to pay, and carried also a little book in his pocket containing another list of promises to pay, not his own. It was a copy of the Psalms. And when one of his own promises to pay fell due, he selected from the Psalms some one of the many there found, and on his knees, alone with the Lord, he presented the selected promise, and then went forth into the street, and invariably he was shown how and where to find the money to meet his notes the day they fell due; and this made him doubly anxious to meet every note and every bill promptly.

At one time, early in this protracted struggle, he was brought into a great strait by a small note. The amount was only five hundred dollars, equal to one hundred pounds. This he might reasonably expect from his customers for orders or outstanding bills at any hour of any day; therefore he gave it no thought. Then, too, he was in the habit of interchanging favours with several of his neighbours in the way of lending and borrowing when one was "short," and the other was "over," and did not for a moment doubt that he could, if he should need it, borrow the amount at the eleventh hour.

When the days of grace were gone, and the last moments before the time for protest had come, he found his till empty, and his bank account exhausted; so he sallied forth to borrow. Calling first upon his



nearest friend, nearest both as a neighbour and friend, with the question, "Have you five hundred dollars over to-day?" The answer was, "No; I am sorry to say I have had to borrow this morning to meet my own bills." From him he went to another, and then to another and another, until the list of those to whom he felt free to apply was exhausted, and from each received substantially the same reply, "No; nothing over. Short myself to-day." Then he began to tremble for himself. Small as the note was, he knew very well that it would ruin him to have it protested. One note left unpaid one day after maturity would ruin his credit, and drive him to bankruptcy. He had come to the last hour, and had exhausted every known resource; there was but thirty minutes left, and the note was unpaid. Hastening to his own establishment, as he entered the door he saw a copy of the Psalms on the counter; picked it up, passed on and went down through the basement into the large safe where his valuables were stored, and there, in the gaslight, opened to one of the precious assurances from God put upon record by the sweet Psalmist of Israel in the time of one of his own great straits, bowed down with the promise spread out before him, and in the strength of its encouragement cast himself upon the Lord for help. As he arose from his knees it came into his mind that a certain person of whom he had not before thought, and with whom he had never interchanged such kindnesses, might have the money, and if so,

would possibly be willing to lend it to him. Instantly he started to ascertain, and in answer to the question, "Have you five hundred over for me to-day?" the cheerful response was, "Yes, a thousand if you want it."

So the note was paid, the peril was over, and what was more, a lesson was learned which has never been forgotten, and has often come into use in succeeding days. In truth, this put him upon a novel plan for the payment of his notes in bank. The Psalms became very dear to him. Within the flexible covers of the copy he carried in his breast-pocket, near to his heart, he placed a list of his "bills payable," with the dates of maturity placed opposite each one. Thus over against his own promises to pay he had within the same covers the promises of God. And when one of his own promises fell due, he selected from the Psalms some one of the many promises of God, and retired to the safe, and there on his knees first presented the selected promise of God, and rested the case with the Lord, and then went forth to find the Lord invariably as good as His word, for he never failed to be shown where and how to find the money to meet his notes the day they fell due.

This continued through many months, until his business grew, his house was established, and his notes all paid.

The struggle was long and hard, but the promises in the Psalms enabled him to meet all his notes in

bank, and carried him through it to the end with a conscience clear, a credit good, a business made, and a heart filled with faith, gratitude, and love.

Yet another example, and a very different one, is found in the memoirs of

A CELEBRATED GERMAN OCULIST.

In one of the minor places of the Faderland there dwelt a very genial, gentle, social schule meister, with his wife and children. One day it came into his mind that he might do something more than be a teacher of little ones ; and, as his custom was, when greatly pressed by anything, he asked counsel of the Lord. Soon he became satisfied that he ought to make the attempt. It is hard to rise in an old country, and his plan seemed presumptuous to his friends, especially because he had very little money, and had a family to support, and to become a surgeon, as he hoped to do, would require a residence at some university long enough to acquire his profession and secure his diploma. Nevertheless, he was bent upon it, and set out for the university in company with a friend. On the way his friend was detained by business, and he waited for him. The detention was prolonged, and still he waited. At last, while only half-way in his journey, his money was exhausted, his purse was empty.

He was one of those who in every storm hide themselves in Christ, but in sunshine sally forth without him. And now in his strait for money, he

locked his chamber-door, and bowed down to plead for help and counsel. This done, he went out, and soon met a man of wealth from his native town. The meeting was as cordial as it was unlooked-for, and very soon his old friend inquired of him whither he was bound, and how he was to pay his way? And when told in all honesty his plan, and that he was penniless, he cheered him on, saying, "Bravo, Heinrich! You are a noble fellow. God bless you!" And then he volunteered to lend him money for himself, and see to it that his wife and children should not want for bread at home.

This bore him on to the university with a bounding heart, and established him in it with a purse not empty. His treasury, however, unlike the widow's unwasting cruse and barrel, after a while became exhausted. Pay-day for his apartments came, and found him without a penny.

His landlord was a hard-faced man, from whom he expected nothing but hard words and a summary ejection. In his strait he had recourse, as usual in all times of trouble, to aid and counsel from his invisible but too much neglected Friend. He locked the door, bowed upon his knees, confessed his negligence and all his sins, and begged for help once more—just once.

As he rose a knock was heard, and the dreaded presence of his landlord was announced. Ushered in, he took a proffered seat, and commenced in very kindly tones inquiring about the student's welfare and means

of living, and ended by forgiving the debt, and freely offering to allow him to continue in the rooms, and also to give him money, and aid him in buying his frugal fare in days to come.

So he made his way through the prescribed time and study, by repeated help and counsel given in such signal ways as to bind him more and more to his heavenly Counsellor in all his future course.

But now he had his way to make in his new profession, and this amongst older men of fame already gained. Then, too, he had a heavy debt upon him, without a single silver groschen toward its liquidation.

Yet in his straits, whether for money or for success, he knew where to go, and went, never without success. One difficult case after another he undertook, at first amongst the poor, and his operations as an oculist were so successful as to cause his fame to grow apace, and by and by the rich began to seek his skill. Step by step he rose to the first place in the front rank of his profession in his day, and finally, in the most signal answers to his prayers, received money to pay all his debts, and live as became his name and high associations.

He reminds one of Jacob, often falling into straits, and then flying to the Lord for help,—full of schemes and trouble in early manhood, but rising in the end to princely fame and power.

These men—the attorney, the merchant, the oculist—saw no restrictions in the Word of God, more

than Jacob did, regarding help and counsel from the Lord in matters other than the so-called religious ; and in all their appeals to God, whether for ways and means to meet their obligations, or wisdom for the affairs before them, they found the promises as quickly honoured as when they went for help purely spiritual.

And if any one, in any walk of life or in any question about entering upon this or that profession, doubts whether it is our privilege to gain help and counsel from above in such matters, let him try it, and he will soon know the truth for himself, and be enriched as well as convinced by his own experience.

CHAPTER X.

GIVING AND RECEIVING.

"I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."
—ACTS xx. 35.

GIVING from a sense of duty is one thing, and giving with delight is quite another. The one results from law and the other from the gospel. Undoubtedly it is better to give from a mere sense of duty than not to give at all, but it is far better to give from the impulsion of a heart full of love to Jesus than from any amount of legal pressure. He who gives from a sense of duty has so much blessedness as this, that he feels that he has done his duty, however painful it might have been ; but he knows nothing whatever of the greater blessedness of giving than receiving taught by our Lord Jesus. That is gospel fruit, and does not grow on legal trees.

The stand-point of press and pulpit, with rare exceptions, on this subject is from the lower plane of law, and must be raised to the higher one of the Gospel, before the kingdoms of the world can become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. The

greater blessedness of giving, or rather the glory of Christ which produces it, must be so set forth and so apprehended that men will devote their energies to making money, not to hoard on the one side or squander on the other, but to hold, and use, and give for the cause of Christ and the benefit of man. Why should not the farmer cultivate his fields, or raise and improve his stock, with a view first of all to meet the first demands upon him—those of his own family and person, and then, like Paul at his tent-making, that he may have wherewithal to give for his Lord and Master? Why should not the man of business have the blessedness in his heart, and carry it with him into every transaction of his life, of the love of Jesus, for whose sake he buys and sells, freights ships and sends them, builds houses and occupies or rents them, constructs railways and runs them?

This motive, full and strong, would fill his soul with cheer at every step, and cast its sunshine over all his life.

The minister who fills his place from a sense of duty merely, who grinds daily at the heavy sermon-mill, goes reluctantly from house to house in parochial visits, and toils from week to week through the ministerial round,—all because he must, may be very good; but he is no minister of the gospel, however faithful he may be. The gospel is glad tidings from a glad heart. The idea of proclaiming glad tidings from a sense of duty is absurd, almost ludicrous, if it were not painful. Let such a minister go to the overflow-

ing fountain, and have his heart filled with the love of Christ ; let him receive so freely and so fully that he is overflowing with love and joy ; and let him, instead of grinding at his heavy sermon-work, go to Jesus, ask and receive truth and grace from him, until his heart and study are full of the Holy Ghost, shaken by the power of God, and then go into the pulpit and from house to house to break the bread of life with gladness and singleness of heart ; and oh, what a new and joyous light will flood his pathway ! But is not this just as true of the merchant, banker, lawyer, doctor, mechanic, farmer, and every other man, as of the minister ? Is there any more reason why any other sphere of life should be deprived of the bright and gladdening rays of the Sun of Righteousness than that of the minister ?

God calls one man to the work of preaching, and tells him, "Go and preach, and lo ! I am with you always ; all power in heaven and earth is given unto me ; ask and receive, that you may be full of the joyful tidings, and full of joy in proclaiming the good news to others." And He calls another man to business, and bids him go and spin cotton or wool, or freight ships, or buy and sell in the market, and tells him, "Lo ! I am with you always ; and I have the winds and the waves in my hands, and all the tides of human affairs I control : ask of me, and I will give you wisdom and success, and you shall glorify me in it all, and you shall have whereof to give for the spread of my gospel and for the relief of my

poor, who are always with you. Ask of me, and I will give you, first, the wealth of the isles of the sea and mines of the mountains, and then, by means of your gifts, I will give you the conquest of the world to my throne and sceptre." This is the gospel of giving and receiving. He who has learned it fully has become in so far truly Godlike. The lost image of God is so far restored to his soul.

God himself is the great Giver of all, and He knows the infinite blessedness of giving in all its fulness. He creates to give. He opens His hand, and every living thing is satisfied. He pours out upon the earth daily supplies for twelve hundred millions of human beings; and from the broken meat of His table twelve thousand millions of living creatures are fed and feasted all the time. He sheds down His sunshine and showers upon the evil and the good, and does not do it grudgingly. He feeds and clothes, and holds up His ungrateful children, the disobedient and unthankful, and delights to do it. He gave His Son to die for us whilst we were yet enemies against Him; and our ascended Redeemer has received gifts for men, even for the rebellious—the gifts of life and peace for ever.

God is also, in one aspect, a great Receiver. His own love for His creatures is so great, that all their joys are his own. A cup of cold water in the name of a disciple has its joy in the heart of Jesus himself first, or it could not have its reward from His hand. A visit to the sick or imprisoned one comes

home to the soul of our Redeemer, or it could never be reckoned as if it were unto Him.

God receives a revenue of bliss from all his works, and especially from all His loving children. He who attuned the spheres, and made the morning stars to sing together, and who devised the mechanism of music in the feathered songsters and in the human frame, enjoys, as well as understands, music to perfection. And He who spread forth the heavens, rounded out, and upheaved the earth, adorned the skies, and beautified the world, and painted every hue and line of beauty in the universe, is an Artist in whose breast His own conceptions are a feast, and whose works are a delight. And He who so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son to save it, has a heart to feel all the joys of the redeemed, even as it pitied the lost, and sent to save them.

Upon this image, after this likeness, man was made; and to this image he is restored in Christ by the gospel. When shall we see this great matter of giving and receiving taken out from under the law, and brought under the gospel?

Those who press legally the question of giving, fail to find any one rule by which to regulate the matter. One thinks he finds in the old Jewish tithing system the rule of a tenth as that which should be paid into the Lord's treasury. Another looks deeper, and finds that the tithes were only a small part of all that was required of the Israelites of old, and estimates a third as much

nearer the whole amount. And so the two agree not together.

Coming to the later economy, we fail utterly to find any mathematical line drawn. The arithmetic of the gospel upon this subject is that of the heart, and of the demands of Christ. The law is that of liberty and love, not of duty and constraint. The Saviour himself commends the poor widow who casts into the treasury, not a tenth, not a third, but all her living. Barnabas, and many others, in the time of distress, when widows are suffering, sell even their lands and houses, and bring all they get for them, and lay it at the apostles' feet, and it is accepted. And the Church in general council lay upon Paul and his companions the duty of gathering from the Gentile churches, offerings; and Paul charges the churches, in pursuance of this matter, to give cheerfully, as every man has it in his heart to give, and as every one is prospered of the Lord.

Now has not God himself shewn us a better way than that of any mathematical line or rigid inflexible requirement?

The greatest and best gift of God to us is that of Himself—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and the best and all-inclusive gift for us to make in return is that of ourselves in all our interests.

In the gift of Himself to us, God has given us all things. He is monarch and maker of all, and He is ours. He administers all affairs, as well those of commerce and the crops, government and science, as

those of charity and the Church ; and if He is ours and we are his, He will withhold no good from us.

In the gift of ourselves to Him, our all is included ; nothing is reserved, and for us, after giving all to Him, to hold our time or money as our own, and dole it out to Him by constraint of law, from a mere sense of duty, simply because we must, parting with it always reluctantly, is not only not according to the principle of gladness, but argues either that we are grossly ignorant of what is included in the gift of ourselves to God, or grossly unfaithful and untrue to the full surrender we have made.

God has given Himself and all things to us freely, and offers to dwell within us, and work in our souls the same free, full, gracious, generous, bounteous love of which He is full, and make it a joy to give as well as a joy to live. And if we give ourselves to Him ; if we open the door by faith, and bid Him, in all truthful earnestness, a hearty welcome to our souls, He will work in us to will and to do, to love and to give, just in our way and measure, as He Himself does of His own goodwill and way.

This is the gospel of gladness in giving, as that of looking also unto Jesus in all our affairs for counsel and direction is the gospel of gladness in receiving ; and they who teach simply or mainly the *duty of giving*, and prescribe *laws* and *rules* for it, surely fail of the grace of God in this matter, and also of the truth as it is in Jesus.

To place the matter of giving and receiving under

law instead of gospel, in the very nature of the case assumes that what a man has is his own, not God's ; and what he makes he makes for himself, not for God ; and what he gives he gives out of his own, not out of what he holds as from the Lord and belonging to Him. It assumes, either that in giving one's self to the Lord, we do not give Him all we have as well as all we are ; or else, that after giving all up freely, Indian-like, we take back our gifts.

There is another evil, however, inherent in this lower plane of giving and receiving ; it involves and fosters low and selfish motives.

Much of the giving, and receiving too, by Christians is wholly unchristian in principle and spirit. Not much of it will bear the light of the final test, and receive the plaudit of the Judge. Not to speak of the manner in which Christians make money,—which, if it be wrong, is one of the evils of this low and legal standard,—when money is made, they hold it as their own, and sometimes give it in such a way, on purpose, as will glorify themselves and gain the praise of men, not the praise of God ; the very motive which ruled in the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira, inducing them to give largely, whilst yet they lied to the Holy Ghost in professing to give all, whilst withholding part. And sometimes they give professedly for the cause of God, but really for themselves, for their own comfort and respectability. Many a church is built and many a minister secured, not as a means of spreading the gospel feast for the

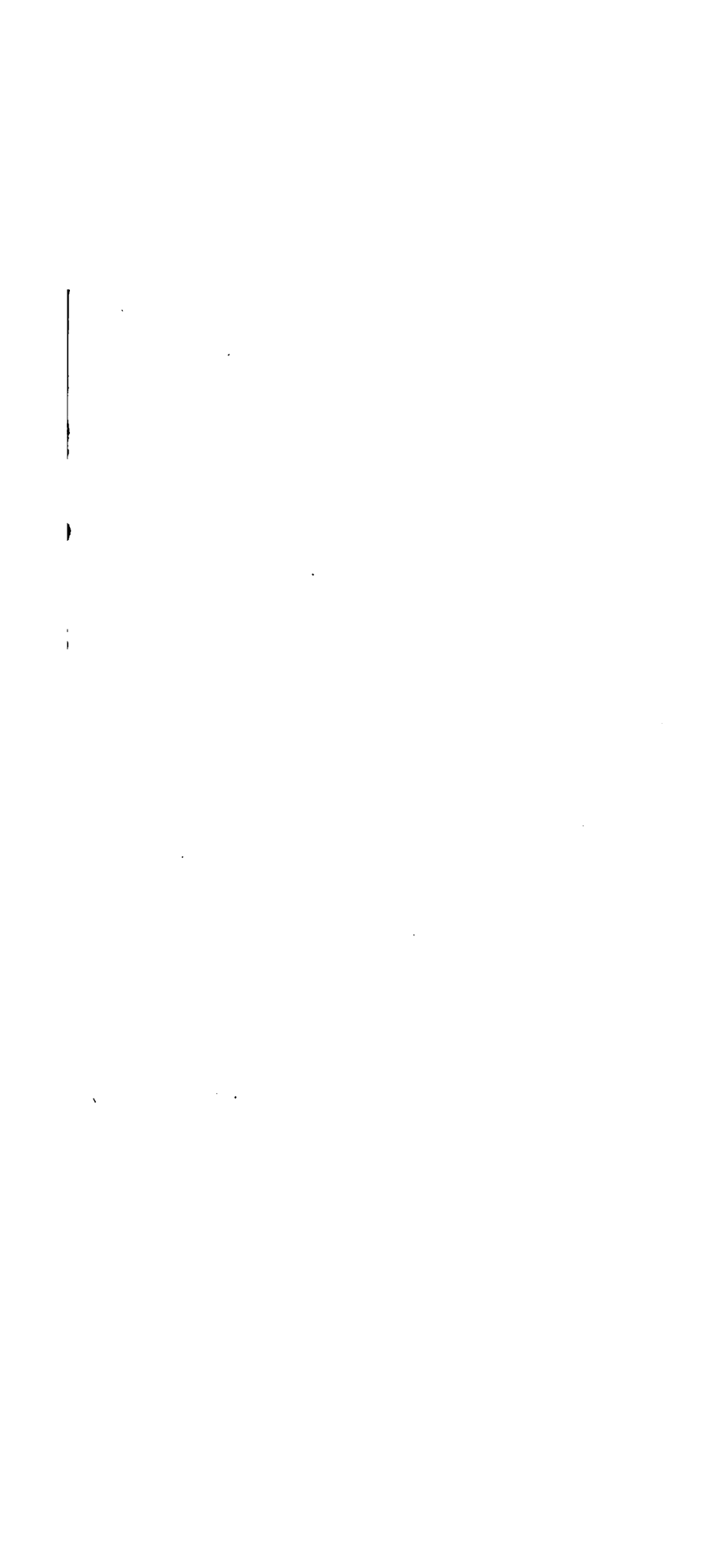
poor, the lame, the halt, and blind; not for the masses, but for the proprietors themselves and their families, and they are in fact, and in heart too, proprietors of both ministers and churches; and ye they count all they give as to the Lord, not for themselves. If they should put the matter truly, they would say, not, I have taken out of that which was mine, and given so many thousands to the Lord to build his church and support his minister; but, I have taken so much out of what was the Lord's, and devoted it to myself in a church and minister.

If churches were really built for the Lord, like the churches in the wynds of Glasgow, for example, we might oftener witness in them the glorious scenes of pentecostal power, and the glorious signs promised to be given as God's own testimony to his own commission for the spread of the gospel, even unto the end of the world.

Let us examine ourselves, and see whether in this matter we are in the faith or not; and if we find we are not, let us give ourselves anew to Christ in all our interests, and never take back our gift again in any part; and let us long and pray that in giving and receiving, even as in forgiving and being forgiven, the gospel may find acceptance, have free course, and be glorified of all.

PART III.

RESULTS.



PART III.

CHAPTER I.

EFFICIENCY.

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."—2 COR. iv. 6, 7.

HITHERTO our thoughts have been chiefly occupied with Christ as our sufficiency in all things: it is fitting that we turn briefly now to the fact that He is our efficiency in all things as well. Not only is it true that we can do nothing without Christ, but it is equally true that, being in Him, nothing that we do can come to anything except by His power. Paul filled with faith and the Holy Ghost, standing up strongly in Jesus and heroically for Jesus, may plant, and Apollos, as full, and true, and bold, may water; but all will come to nothing, do all they can, unless God our Saviour, by His own almighty power give the increase.

The sons of Sceva, when they attempted "in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preacheth," to cast out devils, failed to do it, and were themselves rough-handled by the demoniacs. Why? Because the power of the Lord was not present to do the work.

Paul gave the command in the name of Jesus, and the demons immediately left those possessed by them. Why? Because the power of the Lord was present to make them do it. The kingdom of God in all things, like His work of miracles, is supernatural, and therefore supernatural power alone can build it up. It is a kingdom not opposed to nature, but above it. The vegetable kingdom is not opposed to the mineral, but above it, and sustains itself upon it. The animal kingdom is not opposed to the vegetable, but is a higher one, and feeds upon it. The human kingdom is higher still, and commands all below it for its purposes. The kingdom of God, in like manner, is not opposed to, but above the human, and bears rule in man and over all under Him. The force of the mineral kingdom is physical, that of the vegetable kingdom is vital, and of the animal a vitality still higher; that of the human, combining all below it, superadds spiritual, intellectual, moral force, and that of God is a force not physical nor vital merely, nor human, but above them all,—a force divine, and this kingdom exists only in God himself, and in those in whom He dwells. The kingdom of God, therefore, in its very nature is

supernatural and divine, and can be established and sustained by God alone.

We have this treasure in earthen vessels, and in a broad and true sense we pour it from heart to heart in the words we speak; but it exists in our hearts only by the presence and power of God, and it is received at our lips only by the presence and power of God opening the hearts of those to whom we speak.

Joshua was taught the lesson, that power belongs to God alone, as a soldier, soon after being installed in the place of Moses, and seems never to have forgotten it. At God's command he had led Israel gloriously across the Jordan on dry land, when its annual swellings were at their height, and he had already besieged the first stronghold in his way. Going out to view the walls of the city, he was confronted by a warrior, sword in hand. Marching boldly up, he gave the challenge, "Art thou for us or for our enemies?" The answer was, "Nay, but as captain of the Lord's host am I now come." Instantly Joshua submitted to his authority, and fell upon his face on the ground. Then the Lord, in answer to his question, bade him take his shoes off from his feet, because the ground on which he stood was holy; and at once took the entire command of every movement.

Then, instead of permitting the armed host to take the city either by assault, or siege, or strategy, He caused them to march around it in triumphal proces-

sion daily, seven days in succession, and then He himself, by his own power, without a single blow from them, threw down the walls and let them march in and take it. After that, however large the part taken by himself or the army under him, in the conquest of any city, or defeat of any opposing force, Joshua never for a moment ascribed the victory to any one but God.

The apostle Peter, speaking in behalf of himself and John, surrounded by a wondering multitude, whose eager gaze was fixed upon them, because at their word, in the name of Jesus, the lame man had been healed, said, "Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though we by our own power or holiness had made this man to walk? Be it known unto you that the name of Jesus, through faith in His name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know."

So it is also in all God's work; it is the power of God, through faith, that lifts men up from their palsied state in sin and guilt, and gives them every conquest over the threefold power opposed to their salvation.

Our drift of thought in the previous chapters may have tended toward the conclusion, that if we should stand up *in* Jesus as well as *for* Him, and be filled with His power and presence in our own souls, and so find in Him our sufficiency, we should certainly see His work prospering in our hands. If we should so look to Him as to be full of the joys of His salvation, our glad testimony would surely be heard and heeded.

But this conclusion will not do ; alas ! it is not true. We must indeed look to Jesus as our own sufficiency, and we must also look to Him for that divine efficiency without which all our testimony will fall upon ears that will not hear, and hearts that will not heed.

It is quite possible that one may be a very happy Christian, and yet a very inefficient one. He may have faith in Jesus that floods his soul with delight, and may freely tell his joys abroad, and yet his story may be in the ears of those who hear it an idle tale.

Whilst Peter was speaking to the company gathered in the house of Cornelius to hear him, the Holy Ghost fell on them that heard ; the power of God came down from its higher place in God himself, and opened their hearts to hear and heed His word from His servant's lips, and so set up His kingdom in their hearts. If God himself had not put forth this power in the hearts of Cornelius and his company, the words of Peter, although inspired by God Himself, would have fallen powerless on their ears. Of Samuel the prophet it is recorded that the Lord let none of his words fall to the ground. That is, the Lord not only inspired the words that Samuel spoke, but fulfilled them all.

A CERTAIN MAN,

Who had learned the secret of happiness, but not that of a corresponding usefulness, may serve as an example of the fact under review.

This man was not a useless one : he was no idler in the market-place, but a busy worker in the vineyard, and his work was prospered in a degree, but not at all in proportion to his own happiness in his Saviour. He was a scholar and an earnest student of the Word of God in the Greek and Hebrew tongues. He was a preacher of no mean attractions. His opportunities of winning souls to Christ were ample. His communion with Jesus was so full and deep that very often he was completely overpowered with light and love divine, and would lay for hours in helpless ecstasy. In those hours he saw things unutterable, and also things most heavenly, which might be uttered, to which he gave utterance freely from pulpit and press. Yet, after all, no great power attended his words or works. He was a wonder to those who knew him well on two accounts : first, because of the abundant revelations God was pleased to give him ; and second, because of the meagre fruits of all his labours.

How can these things be ? So asked his friends. Why is it that he should himself know so much of God, and receive so much from Him, and do so much for Him, and yet have so little power attend his word and work, and so little fruit gathered from his husbandry ?

A glance at his hours alone with God will reveal the answer. See him there prostrate before the Lord—his shoes put off because the ground is holy, and his eyes lifted up to God his Saviour. What is the burden of his desires ? The *bliss* of communion.

Like Joshua he is prostrate, and like Moses he cries, "Lord let me behold thy glory." And God answers his request. He feeds and feasts upon angels' food, and is satisfied. Henceforth his business is to unfold to others what he has seen, in so far as he is able to put it into words, and as he judges others able to receive them. He is satisfied. Ah! there is the secret. He falls before the Lord like Joshua, but does not learn, like him, the lesson that God our Saviour, as the Captain, must lead him forth from conquering to conquer in His name, and by His power break down the walls before him; and so he is satisfied to feast himself and spread the feast before others without seeking, also, the conquering power. He goes into the cleft, like Moses, and sees so much of God's glory as he can bear, and is satisfied to enjoy it himself, and tell it to others, but forgets to plead effectually, Moses-like, that he himself shall not be sent at all unless God will go with him in all his work as his leader and commander, and accompany His own word at his lips with power divine.

For his own soul he asks and receives, seeks great things, and finds them; but he fails to plead in like manner effectually on behalf of others. He communes with His God sweetly himself, but gets no communications from Him to those to whom he speaks. His discourses are full of what God has given to him for himself, but have in them nothing at all that God has given him, as He gave to Nathan for David, to deliver as the message of God to them. It is as if

the favoured servant of a king should himself feast in the palace, whilst famine was prevailing outside, and thousands were dying of hunger, and then go forth to the famishing thousands, not with his hands full of bread for them to save them alive, but with his tongue full of the story of what a luxuriant feast he himself had enjoyed.

To secure conquering power in and with the gospel, the first thing is to obtain a specific gospel message, like that of Nathan to David, from God to those who are addressed, and then to gain also the accompanying power of God, which, and which alone, can bring it effectually home to their hearts.

ANOTHER MAN

There is, whose course presents a singular contrast with this one. He is quite on the other extreme, and seems to have forgotten the necessity there is for one's-self to have his own life hid with Christ in God, and his own stability secured by the constant support of power Divine sought and received every day and hour, and his own growth nurtured by daily manna for his own soul to feast upon. On the contrary, he seems to have been wholly absorbed in thoughts of the indispensable need of messages from God to those who are without God and without hope, and of the power of God to accompany His messages and make them effectual to those who should hear them. Consequently he has not only himself pleaded in public and private for messages to deliver, and

power to accompany them when delivered, but he has stirred others up to plead in like manner that he might have words from God to the people to speak, and the effectual working of God's power to open the hearts of the people to receive them. And it has been to him even according to his faith. Multitudes have been moved and hopefully converted under his preaching. From place to place where he has gone, the power of God has been evidently with him; "souls have been added daily unto the Lord" through his instrumentality; and thousands will praise God throughout the boundless ages to come for the arrows of the Lord from the quiver of this archer; and yet, after years of wonderful success in winning others, he seems now in the greatest peril of becoming a cast-away, he has not for himself secured the depth and wealth of personal experience, and personal faith and communion, which, after having done all he has for others, would enable him to stand. Alas for him, he has brought himself under a cloud! But for the faithfulness and grace of Him who sent Nathan to David, and who Himself appealed unto Peter, and to both alike gave repentance and remission, his position would be one utterly hopeless. The lessons are obvious. Without full personal union with Christ, the most eminently useful messenger of God may not himself be able to stand; and, on the other hand, without seeking specially and effectually for the message from God for those to whom he goes, and the power of God to accompany the message, the

preaching and teaching of the happiest Christian in the world may prove only as a pleasant song in the ears of those who hear him.

Our true aim would be to combine in our own hearts and lives the faith of the one in Christ as his own personal sufficiency for all things, and the faith of the other in Him as the efficiency without which all we do will fall to the ground, and with which all will be gathered up and prospered.

CHAPTER II.

SPECIAL TOKENS.

‘And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many heard these things. And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people ; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself unto them ; but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing their sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits ; and they were healed every one.”—Acts v. 11-16.

SEASONS of signal grace are attended by works of signal power. The usual work of God in such seasons, the dew-like, leaven-like, light-like, life-like work of the Holy Comforter, convincing and converting men, counselling, strengthening, building up, directing, and using them for the advancement of God’s kingdom, is accompanied by startling tokens of God’s presence.

These special displays of power are sometimes in the form of signal judgments, but far more frequently of signal mercies. The design of them is one in aim,


but manifold in application. The one grand object of them all is to turn all eyes to God himself, and convince all hearts of His presence.

Sometimes when there is a great desire to see a glorious work of grace, the eyes of all turn to the means rather than to God himself, and their hearts are fixed upon men and measures rather than upon the power and presence of the Holy One. In such a state of things, if the silent work of convincing and converting men should be done by the holy Comforter, whose work it is, the honour of it would be attributed to the eloquence of men or the wisdom of measures, and not to God; and so the Church, instead of being filled with faith in God, would be filled with faith in man, and confirmed therein. To break up this abnormal state of things some signal token of God's own presence and power is requisite, and works of mercy are the usual ones. For example, in a certain place a desire was kindled to have the work of God revived, and many things were done to secure this object. Meetings were multiplied, and men of eloquence secured to preach. Still, although the general interest increased from day to day, there were no indications of the Holy Spirit's presence amongst the people. The truth was, that all were looking to men and measures to effect the work; or, if they knew, as they surely did, that God alone could do the work, they took it for granted that, having the right men and measures, God would do his part; He would supplement these plans and works of theirs by the

necessary presence of the Holy Spirit. They were wrong in this, that they were leading God, or trying to, instead of following Him. They looked not first to God, but to men and measures.

One amongst them, a lowly one, became convinced of the true state of things, and bore the case up day after day before the Lord with the fervent, effectual cry which prevails.

A certain young man, not unlike the one who came to Jesus with the question, "Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life," became impressed with this same great question, and quite unexpectedly to the praying one, went with it to him. His struggles were intense, and when, under the instructions of his friend, the light of the Lord broke in upon his soul, he was overpowered with joy unutterable and full of glory. For days he was like one in a trance, and spoke of the things of God as Paul might have done of things in the third heaven, while there, or as Peter, James, and John would of what they saw in the Mount of Transfiguration, whilst beholding them. As the two went about together, the one was a wonder to all, and many went to see him and hear him speak of Jesus. The result was, that all eyes were turned away from men and measures to God, our Saviour, and all hearts convinced of His power and presence. Thenceforth the work went forward with a power which all recognised as God's, and under a leadership which all knew to be invisible. And then, when men and measures sank out of sight as a main dependence,



every earnest man and measure seemed to be blest of God.

At other times, when the work of God is in progress, and the Holy Spirit is brooding upon all hearts, and many are turning to the Saviour, there yet are others who seem to be so wrapt about in the folds of carnal security, and so profoundly sleeping in their perilous condition, that the still small voice in their hearts is wholly unheard, and the work about them unheeded; and others still, who hear the calls of God, but procrastinate and excuse themselves. At such times signal judgments alone avail. For example:—At one time, in the lead-mining district of Wisconsin, there was a delightful work of grace in progress, which spread from place to place, and many hundreds were converted. The time was winter, snow covered the ground, and the sleighing was very fine. This favoured a large attendance upon the meetings from the mining villages far and near. But it favoured also the usual gaieties of the season. Dancing parties were given somewhere almost every night, and the race between gaieties and solemnities seemed nearly an even one. Choice between the two was attended by hard struggles, and when the right was rejected and the wrong accepted, compunctions in some were terrible, whilst in others the light was quenched apparently for ever. At last a crisis came. One young woman, well and widely known, was suddenly cut down. She was fascinating, popular, and gay; the life of every circle in which she moved. The voice

of God in her heart induced her to attend various meetings, and to make known the fact that she was deeply impressed, and knew well that she ought to become a Christian. In fact, she seemed fairly to have deserted the parties for the meetings, and it was generally supposed her choice was made. A party of unusual attractions, however, was arranged for a certain evening, and she was invited by one who of all others was most pleasing to her, to attend it with him. At first she declined, then hesitated, and finally yielded, accepted, and went.

Exposed that night to a cold current of air, she became chilled through and through, and the next night died in hopeless despair. Meantime she sent for the minister, and told him she was going to die, and was lost; that her fatal choice had sealed her fate for eternity; that it would be useless for him to talk to her, or pray for her; but she charged him to warn others by her sad fate, and urge them, in her name, not to do as she had done, lest, like her, they should be lost for ever. This charge flew from house to house, and village to village, in connection with the news of her sad end, and all looked upon her death as a judgment and a warning from God; and, as after the death of Ananias and Sapphira, so, in this case, fear came upon all, and believers were the more added to the Lord.

Other occasions sometimes arise for the signal works of God's power, whether of mercy or of judgment, to forestal and counteract the fatal power of

counterfeits of God's work. When men are aroused from the stupid state of sensuous slumber, and begin to believe that there are forces supernatural at work in the world, they are too often ready to stop short of God in some kind of spiritualistic theory, or to give their confidence to some superstitious system which carries them out of themselves, but not up to God. Counterfeits are legion ; multitudes are deceived. Great men are duped ; good men, good in all relations save those with God, are carried away by them. Some of them are very specious ; their claims are high. In their assumed superiority, they ridicule the Word of God as fabulous and antiquated, and look upon Christian communion with the living God by faith as an indefinite, unsatisfactory thing altogether, and claim for themselves vastly superior privileges of intercourse with the unseen world, through spiritual communications with the dead, by various means. Others put the Church in place of Christ, and the saints, or Virgin, as intercessors between the soul and God.

In the days of Paul, one of his first encounters with this counterfeit Satanic power was in the isle of Cyprus, and in the person of Elymas the sorcerer, who withstood the apostle to his face, and kept the Roman governor, Sergius Paulus, from accepting the faith of Christ. Like the sorcerers of Egypt before Pharaoh, his subtlety enabled him to put wonder against wonder, and so obstruct the truth. At last, Paul, taught by the Holy Spirit, who filled his heart,

turned upon Elymas, and denounced him, and told him that he should be stricken blind for a season. And it was so. Then the governor and all about him, seeing this special token of God's power, were convinced of all, and were ready to hear and accept the gospel at the apostle's hands.

In the days of miracles, these special tokens were miraculous; and yet, like the death of Ananias and Sapphira, were so out of the usual line of miraculous demonstrations as to arrest all eyes, and fill all hearts with wonder. In non-miraculous ages, the same beneficent results are secured by such signal works of grace or judgment as God himself may choose; and whilst we may look with confidence for the signal interposition of God by works of power upon all occasions when emergencies demand them, it is His, not ours, to choose what they shall be, whether of mercy or of judgment, and who shall be the persons in whom the special tokens of God's power shall be shown.

It would be utter folly and proud presumption in us to prescribe in this matter to our God. He not only chooses for Himself, but He never repeats Himself. Indeed, if He should repeat the same thing over and over, it would cease to be signal, and fall into line amongst usual things.

Conversion is miraculous in this true sense, that it is the work of God, not of man; but it is His usual work, and therefore is not reckoned amongst the miracles. The great signal works of God are never

wrought but once. There has been but one flood, one storm of fire and brimstone, one burning bush, one series of Egyptian plagues, one pillar of cloud and fire, one passage of the Red Sea dry-shod, one forty years' daily supply of manna, one river stricken from the rock ; one Sinai, with its voice of God and fearful demonstrations of His power ; one manifestation of God in the flesh ; one Calvary, with its bleeding Lamb ; one Pentecost, with its crowns of fire ; and as these great special tokens of God stand alone, and mark the ages, so the lesser ones, which serve His special purposes in the times of refreshing and of peril, are not repeated, but stand each by itself alone.

The practical importance of this feature in the progress of God's work cannot well be over-estimated. Alas, it is too often quite forgotten. God is ready at all times to hear the cry of His people, and, whenever necessary, to interpose by signal demonstrations of His power.

An instance or two which occurred some years ago in the early history of one of our great new cities in the West may serve to set this matter in a light more distinctly practical.

A CHURCH FOUNDED.

The city and everything in it was embryonic. Its situation inspired confidence of future greatness, and drew thousands thither who were all busy in

laying foundations for great things to come. Several churches had been formed and houses of worship built. Still the masses were not gathered within their walls to hear the gospel, and those who entered were not won to Christ. A few earnest Christians saw this state of things, and felt it so deeply that they resolved, after much and prayerful deliberation, to secure if possible, another church; and one where the power of God would be displayed, and sinners saved.

The locality selected was in a neglected centre of the town, and for their meetings they rented an upper room from a saddler, over his shop. The saddler was an avowed infidel. They were few in numbers and mostly women. All who heard of their enterprise looked upon it as entirely hopeless. Some ridiculed them; none looked upon them with more contempt than the saddler. As Sanballet and Tobiah said of the work of the returned Israelites building the wall of Jerusalem, if a fox go up against it, it will fall; so the saddler railed not only against them, but upon them to their faces. As they passed in and out, he often sought occasion to vent his bitter wit to them. Their forbearance nettled him, and increased his scoffing. At last, one evening as they passed in, he stopped them and said, You are going up to pray, are you? Do you think God hears you? Will He answer you? Ah! think you, He will make a church out of such stuff as you? He is going to convert the city, I suppose, because you ask Him! Maybe He

will ! Well, now, suppose you make a beginning. You must commence with somebody : take me. Go up now, and try your hand on me. If you convert me, everybody'll know there's something in it. They know me, and know I am not to be humbugged by your tomfoolery. Go now, go up and try it ; pray for me."

Sure enough they did, and that not in any cursory, or matter-of-course, or matter-of-form sort of way, but in full earnest ; and they gave up the evening chiefly to this one burthen of their hearts.

The next night he failed to rail upon them as usual ; and when their usual time was about half spent he came in, and told them that he had passed a sleepless night and wretched day. His own words had come back upon him with such force that he could not resist them. The sins of all his life had risen up before him as they must appear before God, and chiefest of all, the sin of scoffing at His servants, and making a mock of prayer as he had done to them.

Then he besought them to forgive him, and to pray for him that he might be forgiven of God. They pointed him to Christ, and cited the case of Saul of Tarsus, and encouraged him to trust in Jesus.

At last, after hours, which to him seemed ages, the victory was gained ; he surrendered unconditionally to Jesus, and was at rest. Then the light broke in upon him with such power as amazed him not only,

but all who saw him and heard him speak. The whole city rang again with the news of the saddler's conversion, and all eyes were turned toward this little feeble band in their upper chamber, as those with whom the Lord was at work, and that spot became the radiating point for a glorious outgoing of salvation through the city and the regions round about.

Encouraged by this signal token of God's gracious power, they prayed for one and another, thrown upon their sympathies in the providence of God, and prevailed. One of their own number was the wife of a leading man in the city, largely interested in its lands. Her husband was a man of the world, deeply immersed in schemes and hopes of money-making, and was absent from home, away at the seat of government, seeking to secure a charter for a manufacturing company. One night this woman presented the case of her husband to the praying circle, and with even more than usual fervour they bore his case, hopeless as it seemed, before the throne.

That night this man went with a friend of his, a member of the Legislature, to a levee or reception at the house of the Governor. His friend joined in the dance, but he was a looker-on. Having danced through a certain set, his friend came up to him and found his face suffused with tears, and filled with unutterable solemnity and sorrow. Grasping him by the shoulders, said he, "What, under heaven, is the matter? Come with me into the coat-room and

tell me. You look as if you had lost every friend in the world : what are you thinking about ?” “ Why, said he, as I saw you dancing in the midst of this great gay assembly, the thought came suddenly over me that these thoughtless ones are all mortal, all bound to the judgment, and the thought filled me with desire that they might see themselves as I saw them. Then, I said to myself, What if this was a meeting instead of a levee, and you and I were here to speak to them about death and eternity. How much better that would be than to be here mingling in their gaieties and helping them on to destruction ! As for me, my mind is made up. I am going to seek and serve my Saviour from this time onward.”

And so he did. He wrote the facts at once to his wife. His letter, and the fact that he had that night been made the burthen of prayer in the upper chamber, went abroad through the city together as the news of the hour, and thus another grand special token was given of God’s presence and power in that hallowed spot.

It is needless to say that the church was founded and grew apace. It is now a power in that city.

In view of all the facts, is it not, alas ! too plain that in settling down in the idea that miracles are not to be expected in non-miraculous times, we have gone so far as to make our unbelief a bar to the mighty works of God ?

If miracles may not be looked for, the signal power of God may be expected, and it certainly will be dis-

played in every time of need if we do not hinder it by lack of faith.

The truth, if it should be spoken to-day concerning us, would find its most appropriate utterance in the record concerning the people of one of the places visited by our Saviour while on earth—"He could do no mighty works there because of their unbelief."

CHAPTER III.

SUCCESS PARTIAL.

“EACH one to his work.” This, as a practical result, can be secured only, yet can certainly be secured, by loyalty to Jesus. It is both the prerogative and pleasure of our ever-present King to allot to every man his place. The all-wise God makes no mistakes; and he who submits to Him the question of his own line of life is sure to find the right one.

Each one sufficient for his work. This can be made a certainty, if we are in the line allotted, by standing up in Jesus as our ever-ready Counsellor and almighty Friend, and seeking in the faith which takes no denial for wisdom and grace at His hands.

Each one efficient in his work. This also is perfectly assured, if we keep to the work allotted, and look to Jesus for the proffered power to work the works of His own appointment.

Each one a witness for the blessed Saviour. This, whatever may be the line of life, is the true principle of success in winning souls. Every one may talk to others of the wonderful works of God, whether in the household, shop, bank, factory, market, on the farm, or in the pulpit, and this is the grand

and easy means of glorifying God and saving men.

Each one successful. This is the rule inevitable in whatever work or calling, if the calling be of God, and there be faith and faithfulness to Jesus as a King, Counsellor, Friend, and Helper in it.

Each one to see the signal works of God, by which God will glorify Himself. This is a privilege assured if we grasp the promises, and plead them with the faith and fervour that prevails.

These principles, every one, have their sure foundations in the economy of God's kingdom, as made known to us in His Word; and the time has now come when we ought to see them grandly realised.

Concerning the various callings which we name secular, the hour has arrived for a radical revolution in theory and practice. We can now no longer afford to allow the claim of Satan, that all the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, belong to him, and that he can bestow them upon those who bow down to his corrupt and selfish maxims.

We have the promise that the meek shall inherit the earth, and the assurance that the kingdoms of the world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord; and the day has fully come when we are to go up and possess the promised inheritance.

This we are well able to do. If the servants of Christ will first seek their several callings, of whatever kind, and accept them at the hand of God, as He may choose and allot them, and then take advantage

of the provisions God has made, and gain from God Himself, from day to day, the wisdom and the help He proffers to us by prevailing prayer, the men of Satanic maxims will be distanced in the race—they will not stand the competition. The old story of Jacob and Laban will become a new one, true in the great business centres of the world, and all the world of commerce, and in every field of enterprise, as it was in Mesopotamia in the matter of the flocks and herds.

And the ancient history of the competition for the throne of Israel between the two sons of David, Adonijah and Solomon, will be reproduced in every land and every government under heaven. And the kingdoms will thus become the kingdoms of our Lord.

No other question looms up before the thoughtful Christian mind in the immediate future with such grandeur as this of the conversion of the industrial, commercial, political, educational, and social interests of the world to Christ. How shall it be done? This is the question of questions for us in the work of conquering the earth for Jesus. And the solution is before us.

The greatest work before the Church of Christ to-day is that, not of educating ministers to do the work that belongs to every one of us to do as well as the minister; not of sending missionaries out far and near; not of building churches and founding seminaries of sacred learning: these are works very great: but the greatest work before us is that of carrying

the gospel into every walk and work of life. Let Christians accept the allotments God makes for them in the great monetary, commercial, and industrial circles of London, Paris, New York, and other centres, and take the proffered aids held out to faith and prayer, and push the competition upon the principles of truth and righteousness, and the servants of the devil, and all their corrupt and selfish principles and practices would be driven to the wall in a single generation; and this would be a conquest greater than that of planting the gospel, upon present principles and plans, in all the cities of India, China, and Japan. It would be the beginning of the end for the great millennial triumph.

The work of the future for merchants, bankers, tradesmen, mechanics, manufacturers, brokers, railway, steamer, and telegraph managers, is a work greater, more earnest, and more potential for the glory of God and the salvation of the world, than even that of ministers of the Word, except indeed as in this very thing, the ministers shall be the leaders and instructors of the people.

No discovery of the age—not those of the great explorers in the tropics and the arctics, not those of science, nor those of gold—can for a moment compare in grandeur of results with that of the true principles of bringing all secular interests under gospel sway; and every man who has discovered for himself that he may accept his calling as from God, wherever and whatever it may be, and may rest

4

upon Christ for all the wisdom and help he needs to insure the highest, most perfect, and permanent success, has for himself made the grand discovery which is yet to prove the gospel-power of conquest in all the world of property and cash ; and more than this, he has discovered the principle which will make him a perpetual conqueror in his line, give him success above all he has dared to ask or think, and make him a power in his sphere.

The importance of this matter cannot be magnified. The more thought you give it, the more its grandeur will appear.

For the individual Christian it is the true secret of carrying the sunshine in the heart and around the person, through all the dark and difficult passages of life, and into all circles where he goes.

And for the Church it is the grand key to the conquest of the world. Concerning the direct work of winning souls to Jesus, success depends upon the same great principles—loyalty to Jesus as our King, and faithful following after Him as our Captain in every work ; looking to Him to choose our ways and lead us in them ; trustfulness in Him as our wisdom and our strength ; faith in the promises, and prevalence in pleading them. These principles, practically and heartily accepted, and faithfully and fully carried out, cannot but insure the best results.

Success is sometimes occasional only, achieved, it may be, in some one work, and only one in many years or in a lifetime.

Examination in every instance of this kind could not fail to show that the one success was secured by a temporary practice of these principles, and the general barrenness was the result of permanently neglecting them.


Sometimes success is more frequent and yet is fitful; at one time abundant, meagre at another, and then again intermitted entirely.

Here again scrutiny would prove the intermittency and variableness of the faith which grasps, or fails to grasp, the principles of success.

Sometimes success is very great, at first quite surprising for a time, but settles down into moderate easy-going, and continues ever after in the same unbroken current of respectable mediocrity, and never rises to the greatness for which there is ample room.

A true analysis of causes in cases of this kind, which are very frequent, would show a faith very earnest at the outset, enthusiastic in its aspirations, reliant in its trust, fervent in its pleadings, and never wholly intermitted afterwards, yet never much enlarged; quite contented with its achievements; and inclined rather to justify the want of any great advancement than to fall down as at first, and plead for the yet greater things in store.

The Christian world is full of examples of this kind, and it is so important that there should be fewer of them that it may be pardoned if one shall be held up to the light.



A YOUNG MINISTER.

On leaving the seminary, a young man about to enter upon his life-long work cast around to see where he should begin. He did what ministers are more apt, yet no more bound, to do than lawyers, or bankers, or merchants, or artisans, and the like ; he carried the question to the Saviour.

The place opened to him presented an aspect appalling to unbelief, but grand to faith. It was in a quarter of a great and growing city where the non-church-going were numbered by thousands, and where Satan had his seat, and held undisputed sway.

His faith was just sufficient at first to accept the work ; and the difficulties before him were so great that he was driven perforce out of himself to Christ for counsel and help, and found it. He went to Him for plans, and obtained them ; for helpers, and they were raised up ; and for power, and it was given.

Methods of city evangelisation, before unknown, came up, were weighed, found to be of God, and adopted.

Men and women, exactly suited to the work, volunteered, and were appointed to it. That whole quarter of the city was divided into districts, and assigned to his co-workers for oversight and labour. Women were employed as missionaries, and means obtained to support them ; and in a little while the entire circle embraced within his plans was pervaded by an earnest, thorough net-work of Chris-

tian influence reaching every house and every soul.

The young minister grew at every step, and was full of faith. Co-workers of similar spirit were attracted to him, and others caught the faith and zeal before unknown to them; the power of God was not withheld, but signally displayed in various ways, and there were added daily to the Lord such as should be saved.

The work went grandly on until a large house of worship was erected, paid for, and filled to overflowing with forenoon and evening congregations, and morning and afternoon Sabbath-schools; and many hundreds were gathered into the church, insomuch that there seemed to be no more room to receive them. Then the utmost hope of the youthful minister was accomplished; indeed the Lord had done more and better for him than he had dared to ask or think. He had outstripped himself and all around him in that city, and his example had gone forth to other cities stimulating many to like great things.

And then—— What? Did he take his stand on this high vantage-ground of past success, and plead before the Lord for yet greater plans and greater things? No. Did he settle down at ease, and suffer reaction to come and sweep away the good secured? No. Neither the one nor the other. He just kept steadily on in the old plan, and the work went on at a pace moderate indeed, yet fast enough to keep him and his co-workers in tolerable complacency.

Oh ! if he would only rise to the present situation ! But he does not. If he would go now in the same spirit to the Lord as at the beginning. But he will not. If anything could shake him out of his complacency in the things behind, and cause him to press forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling of greater and better things in Christ Jesus ; if anything could send him to his knees with the same hungering and thirsting for counsel in new and greater plans, and for power and help to execute them, felt by him when he stood alone amid a wilderness of work, who can tell, with his accumulated weight of impulse and experience, what he might not achieve ! But, alas for him ! he reverses the apostle's course ; this one thing he does, and will do to the end, he forgets the glorious things ahead, and lives mainly in past achievements.

CHAPTER IV.

SUCCESS COMPLETE.

"And I saw, and beheld a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow; and he went forth conquering and to conquer."

GOING forth conquering and to conquer is the true principle of the Christian warfare. Our progress is that not only of successive battles gained, but of campaign after campaign, to the end of life, successfully achieved. No man has a right to rest on laurels already won, or turn conservator, and cease to press forward in the line of victory. Our warfare is not defensive mainly, but aggressive. However great the conquests of the day, a world lying in sin stretches away beyond. The enemy, driven from one stronghold, flies to another. Do what we may, there will yet remain to be done ten thousand times as much. Every victory achieved should be used as the vantage-ground for a greater one, and each campaign pushed to a successful issue should be our encouragement to undertake one grander still.

The young city pastor, whose good and great work we have just reviewed, achieved complete success in his one grand campaign—worthy of all praise; nothing better could be desired. The pity is, that he

should rest in that, and remain a simple conservator of the past, and not go forth from conquering to conquer.

A CONQUEROR.

The example of Dr —— presents in this respect a striking contrast to that of the young city pastor. In much they were alike, but in this widely different. Both alike took their first step aright. Their training ended, they did not say, as many do, I want such or such a place; no other will do for me. Too many have said this, and been gratified, and their reward has been leanness of soul and barrenness of life. But they laid the question squarely and implicitly before the Lord, and He decided it. The one He sent, as we have seen, to a city field, but the other to a country village. Both alike took the second step aright. How to begin, as well as where, was submitted to the Lord, not merely in form but in fact. Some fall on their knees, and there form their own plans, and afterwards pursue them as if they were the Lord's, as man may form his own plans upon his knees as well as on his feet, or in his chair, or on his bed. The essential thing is not to pray one's-self into plans of his own, but to lay down all plans of his own, and cast himself wholly on the Lord for plans, and never rest until He gives them. Both of these young soldiers, Joshua-like, put off their shoes as on holy ground before the great Captain of Salvation, and put themselves actually, practically, under His leadership.

Both alike fought through their first great campaign aright, and were alike entirely successful—grandly so. But here the likeness ends, and the contrast begins. The city worker rests on his laurels, and is turned conservator. The country worker rose from his first campaign to another more extensive still, and that achieved, pressed forward to still greater things, and so on and on, till——no, alas! not till life was ended, would that it had been so! but until he had fought out many and many a campaign, and won a hundred victories. His one mis-step at last may serve us for yet another lesson, and show us that even the greatest veteran may at last turn conservator, and cease going forth from conquering to conquer. Of this, however, by and by,—the other lesson first.

The country village was the centre of a wide country parish. The place of worship was a district schoolhouse. At the beginning the young minister stood alone. He had not one helper of whom it could be said, as of Stephen or Philip, that he was full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and his congregations were very small. His own soul, however, was soon baptized afresh with fire for his work, and his prayers for a like power upon others were of the kind that always prevail.

One Sabbath night, whilst speaking of the blessed Saviour to his little schoolhouse congregation, as Peter spoke to Cornelius and his company, the power came. All saw it, and were filled with awe. If suddenly fire-crowns had been seen upon their heads, and they had begun to speak in tongues before unknown,

the presence and power of God would not have been more manifest. This was noised abroad, and next Sabbath morning the house was full. A death-like stillness reigned; every word seemed full of weight. The reading of the Scriptures and the psalms and hymns, with here and there a word of comment, impressed the people as deeply as the sermon. It was such a service as never before had been enjoyed in that place. The people, many of them, remained at intermission to pray, and to speak "one to another" of what they had heard and felt. The afternoon was still more impressive, and all except the minister were filled with wonder. He alone seemed disappointed; and at the close besought the people to talk very little, but pray a great deal, and see if God would not come amongst them in signal power.

At night the silence grew oppressive, and then suppressed sobs in different parts of the room gave signs of feelings which could not be suppressed, and when the benediction was pronounced, no one left, but all sat down again and looked toward the minister, as much as to say, "Go on; we cannot leave until we have heard more of this salvation." The minister resumed, and occupied another hour with various exercises, and again pronounced the benediction, but they sat down again instead of going home. After another hour he finally prevailed upon them to disperse by promising to meet as many of them the following Tuesday as should desire to make special inquiry about the way of life.

On Tuesday the house was almost as densely crowded as on the Sabbath. Many meanwhile had found the Saviour, and many more on that occasion laid down their sins at the cross and took up a song of joy.

The beginning was a grand one, but the progress, in its unbroken power, was even more remarkable. Time and again the enemy came in like a flood upon them, and threatened to stop the work and bring about a sad reaction. Sometimes, through pride of success, when from a distance people came to see and wonder. Once through denominational dissension, when the converts were received to communion in the church; and again from the same cause, when a minister of another denomination came and opened another place of worship in the village. Once in the heat of harvest-work, when some dissension arose about the use of rum in the harvest-field. Once in the winter, when a bold and persistent effort at distraction was made through the attractions of sleighing and dancing-parties. And again and again in other ways. But in every case the minister and his faithful helpers prostrated themselves, like Moses and Aaron, before the Lord, and He heard them, and made a way of escape in every crisis; yea, and made every crisis the starting-point for new and greater progress.

This continued month after month until nearly all the people were numbered amongst those who should be saved, and a commodious house was built, paid

for, dedicated, and filled with worshippers. Seldom, perhaps, in the world has any place been so entirely changed. Oh! what a delightful place was that now for a minister! How different, how much better and more inviting, than when the young man sought it as his field of work! Did he so regard it? No. Did he not appreciate the change? Yes. But in that very change he saw what could be done in other places. He loved his parish and his children in it as he loved his soul, but he loved his Saviour better. And by and by the question came up, and would not be put down, whether it was right for him to remain there where so much was done, and so little remained for him to do, simply or mainly to enjoy in days to come the fruits of his early triumphs?

Meanwhile, an invitation came, which he could not well decline, to go and aid the pastor of a large congregation in a community numbering ten to one more than his own country parish. And he went.


Here again he began aright. After a day or two of reconnoitering, and much and prayerful counsel with the pastor, one night the two separated to retire, the one to his own apartments, the other to his prophet's chamber in a neighbouring house, but neither of them to bed. Late in the night, or rather in the early hours of morning, our young minister heard a knock at his door, and when he opened it who should present himself but the pastor, whose first word was, "The Lord is coming!" and his response was—"Nay, but the Lord has come!" Both had been praying,

and both had prevailed. The Lord had answered them in their own souls first of all.

Having compared notes, and ascertained these facts, they put on their hats and coats, and sallied forth to see whether the Lord was doing anything in other houses and other hearts. Very soon they espied a light, and knocking at the door, the people were almost as much delighted and amazed as when Peter, loosed by the angel from his prison, presented himself at the house where they were praying for him. The Lord was there as signally as in their own hearts and houses. From that house they went to another and another, and kept on until the day dawned, and the breakfast-hour arrived, going from house to house, and found the Lord before them in every one.

From this beginning the work of God went forward with a majesty of power seldom equalled, and both were kept busy for months in doing such like work as Ananias did for the blinded Saul of Tarsus, and in a similar way, at the unmistakable bidding of the Lord.

At last, however, the time came for leaving there, and the question came afresh, Where? Whither now? Not long unanswered. Work after work opened up before this young man, until, ere he thought, grey hairs appeared here and there upon his head, and many honours were heaped upon him. Thirty years and more were filled up with successes like these described, and many thousands far and near looked upon him as the one by whom they had



been sought out, as Philip sought Nathanael, and led to Jesus.

Nor did he yet begin to slacken or hold his hand. There is no telling the conquests he might yet have made but for a singular event which caused him to change front, cease to press forward, and begin to defend the conquests made, and play conservator. Another very like himself arose, yet very unlike him too. Public attention was divided, and comparisons made between them. Some methods used by the new worker, and reported to the old with opprobrious remarks, and other like things, caused him to begin to doubt whether his own past work and his own fair fame were not endangered, and whether the cause of Christ itself might not be brought into disrepute. So, after some thought and much mental trouble, Uzzah-like, he put forth his hand to steady the ark of God—for to him it seemed to be terribly and perilously jolted in its progress—but in trying to steady the ark or stop it, his own progress was stayed for ever. He lived many years thereafter, but never again passed through a single scene like the many and glorious ones of his former years.

What an example this of the true course to secure complete success, on the one hand, and on the other, what a warning to us all of the danger of changing front at any time, and ceasing to go on from conquering to conquer!

Few since the days of the apostles have, with ability no greater, achieved so much. None perhaps

have pursued more completely the principles which insure full, continued, and cumulative success, until the evil moment when he yielded to the temptation to hold back instead of cheering on his fellow-worker in the same great work.

There is in the career of the apostle Paul an example of success, complete in all respects; full from the beginning, continuous to the end of life, and cumulative in all its course.

The goal on earth set before him from the hour he was arrested in his mad career of persecution, and never lost sight of through all the long years of his work, in lower circles, was that he should stand before kings as a witness for Jesus, whose servants he had pursued to death.

His first work, and a very great one, was that of witnessing to his own nation far and near for Jesus, and proving that He is the very Christ.

His next great work was that of witnessing to the Gentiles of Antioch, and the region round about.

From this he rose to the broader work of carrying his testimony abroad, through the isle of Cyprus and Asia Minor, where the first Churches were planted amongst the Greeks. A work far greater than all before.

This grand campaign completed, and the Churches all revisited and confirmed in the faith, he entered upon one greater still, across the Egean Sea, in obedience to the summons to come over into Macedonia, so that all Greece at home, as well as all abroad,

heard his testimony ; and oh, how many thousands believed it and were saved ! Oh, how many churches were established !

His final campaigning amongst the Romans, however, was most wonderful of all. He had fully purposed in his heart to carry the like work done in Palestine, Asia, and Grecia, through Rome and Spain, through the Latin race, as it had already been done amongst the Jews and Greeks, and waited only to complete first the work in hand.

This done, he returned to Jerusalem, with Gentile offerings for the suffering Jews, full of his purposed future work amongst the Latins.

His own plans, however, if he had any, were all set aside, and he was sent, not by special commission of his fellow-apostles, not under his own auspices nor those of his brethren, but by the hand of God, through the violence of the Jews and interposing power of the Romans.

All unexpectedly to him, although foretold at Damascus scores of years before, he was brought before the Roman courts in Palestine first of all, and testified to the Latin dignitaries abroad the grace of God in Christ, and then was carried at the government expense to the Imperial City, and there bore witness before the emperor himself and all his court, and laid the broad foundations for the final overthrow of idolatry and triumph of the Gospel throughout the wide domain of Roman domination.

This, his last campaign, was not only the highest

of all in the circles it embraced, but the greatest of all in the extent of its results. Eternity alone will reveal the grandeur of the work.

The sublimity of Paul's position as a prisoner at the bar before Felix, Festus, Agrippa, and Cæsar, yet master of his own position, standing up bound with chains to a soldier, yet making his judges tremble as prisoners themselves at the bar of God, is something not to be described, as the closing series of his witness-work. It is equalled only by that of John in the isle of Patmos, rapt out of himself into the visions of glory in the person, progress and kingdom of the glorified Redeemer, and writing down all that could be written to be handed down to all the world.

Our career cannot be apostolic in the grandeur of the work committed to us, or in the glory of the revelations made to us for others, but it may be truly so in the completeness of our success in the several spheres to which the Lord appoints us, both in its fulness, increasing power, and unbroken continuity to the end of life. We may not glorify God by a death like that of Paul upon the cross, nor by last days like those of John in Patmos, but we may die in our work, with our armour on, and in the fulness of our joyous faith.

CHAPTER V.

DIVINE FRUITAGE OF A WOMAN'S WORK.


"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."—JOHN xv. 16.

I.—THE WIDOW OF FOURSORE, AND THE ORPHAN GIRL OF THREE.

"God bless you, my child, and raise you up, and send you away to do great good in the world!" This was the prayer of an old lady of eighty for a little orphan girl of three, as she tenderly placed the child in her own bed, and laid her hand gently on her head.

The old lady was herself dependent upon her son and daughter-in-law, with whom she lived, and they had taken the child when its parents died, not so much out of good-will as in the hope of gain from the services she would by and by be able to render; and at night they gave the little one in charge to their aged mother to share her bed.

The child was nothing to this aged woman; no relation whatever; a little orphan left in poverty



and want, and she felt herself to be scarcely a welcome guest in the family. Therefore it would have been quite natural if she had looked upon the child as a troublesome little intruder, and wished her away. But it was not so. She yearned over the little creature in tender pity. Perhaps the hardness of heart she experienced in the house of her son foreshadowed to her the hardness of hand sure to come upon the child, and moved her with compassion. Perhaps she saw in her one laid upon her bosom by her Father in heaven, and cherished her as a charge from Him. Perhaps the Spirit, in her heart, unfolded to her, as was done of old in more instances than one, something of the abundant fruitage she would render in after-life. But whatever was the cause, the old lady, night after night, as she carefully placed the child in bed, laid her hand upon her head, and breathed out the same words of benediction, "God bless you, my child, and raise you up, and send you away to do great good in the world!"

Not long after receiving her little charge, the good old lady taught her to say nightly the little prayer—

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
And if I die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take."

To this she soon added the Lord's Prayer—

"Our Father which art in heaven."

Year after year this continued, until, when the aged Christian reached her fourscore years and ten

and fell into the helplessness of second childhood, and the little one arrived at her teens, with the helpfulness of a premature womanhood, the order was reversed. Then the girl dressed and undressed the old lady, and arranged her tenderly for the night. But even then the old lady had the girl come, night after night, and kneel down at her bed-side, where she could lay her hand upon her head, and first hear her say the Lord's prayer, and then give her the same gentle benediction.

• How much of prophecy there was in the nightly benediction will be judged by the facts to be related. Certainly there was great kindness in it ; a kindness that won the child's heart, and impressed the benediction on it for ever ; a kindness all the more impressive, because others around them were cruel to them both : and in after years, when the prophecy began to have its fulfilment, kindness became one of the master-powers by which this child won her way to the hearts of others, and achieved for them the predicted benefactions. What is lovelier than human kindness ? Nothing but the kindness of God. What is mightier than human kindness ? Nothing but the kindness of God. This is the power by which man reaches the heart of his fellow-man, to benefit and bless him ; and this is the power by which God reaches the human heart to conquer it for Himself, and make it the abode of heavenly peace and joy.

The old lady's kindness, in truth, was very touching, very impressive, very fruitful. Who can tell

the amount of good accomplished by its means? It encircled her benediction, and impressed it in such a way as to make it a power in shaping the thoughts, and life, and work, and destiny of her little charge, and so of shaping the character and destinies of hundreds, yea thousands, through her. And it served also to encircle the old lady's own brow in the memory of her ward with an ever-brightening halo of affection; and as a cherished memory of kindness toward herself in the days of helpless dependence and oppressive tyranny, it served to soften her own heart towards the helpless, hopeless poor and suffering always in later life. Like a seed wrapped up in the benediction, the old lady's kindness fell from her withered life into the young girl's heart, where in due time it was warmed into life by the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, and grew into a wondrous tree, with perennial fruitage for hundreds of famishing and perishing souls.

II.—EARLY HARDSHIP AND ESCAPE.

The child's home proved a hard one. She was indeed "raised up" in it as Israel was in Egypt, and "sent away from it to do great good in the world," like Israel too, through unendurable oppression. As soon as she could bear them, the heaviest burthens of the household were laid upon her, whilst she was allowed to grow up in utter ignorance of letters; neither sent to school nor taught at home.

Nevertheless—no thanks to her taskmasters—she was in this very service, albeit no one knew it but the Lord himself who planned it, acquiring two things without which the great good predicted could never have been achieved. By contact with the neighbour's children, she was then learning to speak the German language, and was also gaining the steel and iron powers of activity and endurance from her constant exercise and heavy work to bear her through long years of terrible trial and labour in later life, seldom equalled in the career of any one.

During all these years of girlhood she was kept in ignorance of the fact that she was not the daughter of the man and woman who had taught her to call them father and mother. This enabled them to exact the harder service without question, and induced her to bear oppressions with what patience she could command, from which, if she had known the truth, she would have fled.

To save their own respectability, they pressed the child forward at the age prescribed by custom in their Church to take upon herself the vows of Church membership, and she yielded to their urgency. This was the greater shame because they had never taught her even so much as the alphabet, and had failed to instruct her in the first principles of religion.

They knew, too, if they knew or cared to know anything on the subject, that she was wholly unacquainted with the Lord, and did not even so much as know that there ever was such a thing as a soul

born of God. Thus, but for the kind hand of God himself, by which she was afterwards shown her lost condition, they would have been the means of her eternal destruction, by placing her in the Church when she believed that nothing more was necessary for her salvation.

Finally, after the death of the kind old lady, when she was growing into womanhood, she learned that her cruel taskmasters were not her parents. And as every day added to the load they laid upon her, she made up her mind to leave them as soon as possible. She was ready for any desperate move. Like Israel, she was willing to fly even into the desert to escape her Egypt, in the hope of gaining her promised land.

The coveted opportunity was soon presented in a way quite unexpected. A sea-captain, whose home was in New York, saw her, fancied her, proposed, was accepted, and they went clandestinely away together, were married, and he took her to his home in the city.

III.—THE FIRST GREAT TRIUMPH.

New and still greater trials awaited Hannah (for that was her name) in her new home. Hitherto her life had been spent in a German township in the interior of Pennsylvania. Now she entered upon a very different career in a very different place, and, alas! too soon, she found herself out of Egypt indeed, but truly in the desert. Her passage out had

been a Red Sea triumph, but she quickly came to the bitter waters. Happily for her, and for a great many others to whom she became a real benefactor, the same power that attended the branch cast in by Moses converted the bitter fountain to which she had come, and out of it brought celestial sweetness. Her husband, who was much her senior, was brought home one night in a state of beastly intoxication. She was very much alarmed, not on account of the habit indicated, for she knew nothing of its evil nature, but on account of his terrible sickness, for she had never seen a man in this brutal state before. She washed and cleansed his clothes and person as well as she could, and watched over him with the tenderest solicitude till he was sobered again. And the next day, when she told one of her neighbours about it, she exclaimed "Why, you little fool! don't you know he was drunk? You'll see he'll come home in the same condition to-night." And sure he did, though not all covered as before, nor quite so far gone. Her heart began to grow heavy, but still she could not realise the terrible condition into which she had sold herself. From bad he went to worse, as drunkards do, and to this drunkenness of his own he added violent abuse of his wife, insomuch that her new home became at last more intolerable than the old had been, and she began casting about to see how she could strike tent again, and leave her troubles once more behind her.

About this time a lady tract-visitor called and

invited her to attend church, and talked with her about salvation. She was in just the state to have the truth take hold upon her. The Lord opened her heart to receive it, and very soon her thoughts were all turned away from plans to escape her bondage to her cruel, drunken husband, towards efforts to gain a refuge from sin and death. How to do it she could not discover; all her struggles proved in vain; daily the weight of her sin and guilt increased; the more she tried to find the light the deeper appeared the darkness, until she was driven to despair. During these dark days and nights her pantry was made both the closet where mercy was sought from God, and the place of refuge to which she fled from the violence of her drunken husband. And one night she fled there from the storm of her husband's wrath, and fell down before the Lord, and gave herself up to Him to do with her whatever might seem good to Him. Up to that moment she had repined at the hardness of her lot, and rebelled against it. She could not brook the thought that she was tied for life to such a man, and all the past seemed hard, so hard that she murmured against God for placing her in such circumstances as hers had been during all her life. Her feelings toward her husband were very bitter, his guilt seemed to her something awful, but her own sins against God she had not so well considered; indeed, she looked upon herself as grievously sinned against, but not at all as having sinned. Now, however, the tide began to turn.

God's goodness began to open before her mind, and above all, the great love wherewith He had loved us in giving His only-begotten Son to die for us. And in this new mirror of God's love she saw herself as she had never seen herself before. Her self-complaining was turned to self-abhorrence, her supposed innocence to the sinfulness of ingratitude and rebellion. But then the exceeding riches of the grace of God, and the inexpressible loving-kindness and tender mercy of the blessed Saviour, filled her with assurance that her sins were all blotted out and washed away, and, as she expresses it, "The pantry was all lighted up with the light of the Lord." Then she could exclaim with Jacob at Bethel, "Verily God is in this place, and I knew it not. How dreadful is this place! This is the house of God and the gate of heaven."

IV.—A SECOND TRIUMPH.

Thenceforward Hannah was able to bear with meekness her husband's intemperance and abuse. Her enjoyment in Christ was very great, very sweet, and she was kept by His power through many a storm; and in many a tempest she secured, by calling upon the Lord, the peace of a great calm within, even whilst the winds and the waves raged and roared around her.

To the two other qualifications for her future work, bodily strength and the German tongue, both of which were soon to be put to use, the Lord in this

experience had now added a third, without which the other two would have been in vain, that is the sweet knowledge of His love. Her trials, however, were very great, and after a while she began, gradually, again to harbour the thought of trying to escape them. One night her husband invited her to attend with him the theatre. She declined, and gave her reason, saying, "I can't go. The wings of Christ is over me. But if it was not so, I couldn't go, for I was brought up to believe it wicked to go to such places. But the wings of Christ is always over me, and I can't go nowhere where my Saviour wouldn't go with me, and I am sure He wouldn't go with me there."

Her husband was enraged, and left her, and as he went out he charged her, with oaths and curses, to have his supper ready, and keep it hot for him to eat when he should return. She prepared his supper nicely, and kept it warm until the clock struck twelve, and then, in spite of every effort to keep awake, her eyelids dropped, and she fell off into troubled sleep, and the supper cooled. Then when he came in and found her napping in her chair, and his supper cold, his anger was unbounded, and besides other outrageous things, he raised the window, and threw the supper out into the open street.

Satan had failed to catch her by the theatre, but he had another trap ready set for her. The Lord, however, had His silken cord around her heart, and

Satan could not prevail. She made up her mind at once to leave her husband, and go away (the old lady's benediction coming up afresh) where she might do some good in the world; and the very next day a young man who was going to California proposed to take her with him, and see that she should find something there to do by which she could maintain herself, and be for ever free from the terrible weight of her drunken tyrant of a husband. Not thinking at all of the Satanic trap, nor of any sinister purpose on the young man's part, she said, "Yes, I'll go," and instantly began preparing for the voyage. Amidst her preparations she was arrested by a knock at the door, and who should be ushered in but the lady tract-visitor!

"What are you so busy about? It looks as if you were preparing to go away."

"And so I am. I can't stand it any longer. My husband is so bad, I must get away from him somehow or other."

And then she frankly told the whole story as it was.

The tract-woman expostulated with her, told her how Christ had borne with her, and loved her in her sins, and saved her from them, and how He was able to save her husband, and how she had taken him for life, for better or for worse, and how Satan had set his trap for her, with this young man's offer as the bait, and urged her to give up all thoughts of flying from her husband, and finally proposed to join her

in prayer for his conversion, and give up the whole day to this one thing.

Reluctantly, at last she yielded, and they devoted the day as proposed.

That night, after the tract-woman had left her, and her husband had returned intoxicated as usual, and had worked himself up into one of his most violent fits of rage, she took refuge, as she often had to do, in the pantry; and there again the Lord visited her in a way most remarkable. In the very hour of her husband's greatest violence toward her, the Lord filled her heart with an inexpressible tenderness and pity for him as a poor lost inebriate. Her antipathy against him was all turned to sorrow, and she poured out her tears for him like rain.

From this moment she felt sure the Lord would save him; and her faith was not in vain. They had not long to wait. A few days only after this, he, of his own accord, proposed to accompany his wife to church. That day the minister was to be absent, and for a moment she thought it might not be the best time for her husband to make this beginning, lest he should be disgusted, but instantly the truth flashed upon her, that *it was of the Lord*, and she gladly acceded to the proposition, and they set off for the first time together to the house of God. Before the meeting was opened, she managed, unnoticed, to see the one who was to preside, and whisper in his ear a request that he would remember and say something suited to the case of her husband.

The service was prayer and conference.

The leader was wise, and besides speaking in the most feeling manner with this man in view, he gave, in the course of the meeting, an invitation to any who might desire prayer for salvation to make it known.

Hannah of old, when Eli accosted her, and accused her of being drunk, as she stood praying by the pillar in the temple, was not more absorbed in the one object of her soul than was Hannah, the wife of this drunkard of New York, for his salvation; and to her great joy he rose, and, with a sailor's manly frankness, confessed his sins, and begged the prayers of every Christian, that he might be saved from a drunkard's grave and a drunkard's hell.

It is scarcely necessary to add, what the reader has already anticipated, that he was speedily converted, and that he felt the debt he owed his wife to be second only to that which was due to God Himself. Eight years he lived, or rather lingered, after his conversion. His intemperance had undermined his constitution, and he became partially paralysed, and perfectly helpless. She nursed him, and supported him by her own hard earnings at the wash-tub until he died; and the last words he uttered were these: "If it had not been for her, I should have been for ever lost."

V.—WORK AND INCIDENTS OF THE EIGHT YEARS.

About the time of her husband's conversion, Hannah attended a tract meeting.

Half-a-century ago, pastors and laymen, impressed by the increasing numbers of the people ungathered by the churches, banded together, without respect to denominations, into missionary unions and tract associations, out of which has grown the New York City Mission and Tract Society. In the progress of its work this society adopted a system of mission stations, under the superintendence of competent stationed missionaries, each charged with the oversight of the work in the district assigned to him. At first volunteer tract visitors were enlisted, and the work was carried on by them. Monthly meetings were held in each district, at which the work done during the previous month was reported by the visitors, and appeals made for others to volunteer. Now, there is a band of assistants, larger or smaller, employed in connection with each station, consisting of both men and women, who for a remuneration, small indeed in comparison with the arduous duties they perform and the great good they accomplish, devote their whole time to the spread of the gospel, and the relief and benefit of the poor.

It is due that this much should be said, to call attention to a society which has been owned and blessed of God in the calling forth of such workers as Hannah in no small numbers, who otherwise might have perished themselves instead of saving others, and in winning many thousands to Christ who might never have known him.

One of the monthly tract meetings, twenty years

ago, it was that Hannah, not long after her own conversion, attended.

At this tract meeting an appeal was made for visitors, and Hannah offered her services. The good man in charge knew her very well, and knew her heavy work and heavy burthen at home, so he exclaimed, "My child!" (she was then yet quite young) "how can you undertake it?"

"Oh," said she, "I'm not afraid; I can go through it by the help of the Lord."

Not without misgivings he accepted her, and assigned to her a district; and she went about the work without fee or reward; her service, like that of those better able to give it, was for love, not money.

Her first encouragement sprang out of a great discouragement. She gave a tract, with some kind words of invitation and warning, to a shoemaker on his bench. Her words he threw back in her face, and her tract he tore to fragments and flung them through the open window into the back-yard.

This was a bad beginning; but now behold the end! Passing across the yard a day or two after this the shoemaker picked up a fragment of the tract, and some words struck him with such force that he could not shake them off; and he soon became so deeply troubled, that he went to church, confessed his sins, besought prayer that he might be saved, and soon gave himself up to Christ, and came out a joyous Christian, united with the Church, and remains steadfast to this day.

The next event of special note was the conversion of a Jewish household.

One day in a rain-storm, having done up all her work, and arranged to leave her poor husband safe and as comfortable as he well could be, she sallied forth.

Passing a certain house, she was astonished to see the windows opened, and the rain pouring in upon the carpet. So she called and expostulated with the inmates, saying,

"Why don't you shut your windows down? You'll spoil your carpet."

"Ah!" said one of the women, "Ve vait vor dzee Messiah. He vill come in ze storm. Ve open ze window dat He vill come in. Ve ish Israelites."

Perceiving that they were Germans, she at once began talking to them in their own tongue; and not being acquainted with the name Messiah, she asked them who they meant. The other woman, perceiving that she was a Christian, said in German,

"Jesus, Him you call Christ."

"Oh," said she, also in German, "He has come already, and died for our sins on the cross."

So she began from this and preached unto them Jesus, as Philip did to the Eunuch, and told them how she knew in her own heart that Jesus was the Christ, and how they might know it for themselves if they would only permit the Lord to come in and make himself known to them, and persuaded them to go to church with her, and hear about it from those who could explain it better. The end was, that they

went, and the Lord opened their hearts to receive the truth ; and like the Eunuch, they asked, " What doth hinder us to be baptized ? "

They were four in all in that house—one man and wife, and one man living with a woman who was not his wife. These last were first joined in wedlock, and then all four were received into the Church, and have lived since in a way to honour their profession.

Encouraged by these and similar tokens of God's favour, and finding that more time might still be snatched from her duties, she volunteered to take another district in another division under another agent, without pay.

Now, what with her helpless husband to sustain, and dress, and feed, and nurse, her washing to earn the money for his and her own support, and her two tract-districts, her hands were quite full ; and being amongst Germans, her knowledge of that tongue was put to use, her bodily strength was taxed to the utmost, and her love for Christ had the fullest exercise.

This continued through eight years, and all the time for nothing, until near the close, when one of the agents volunteered to give her fifty cents a-week, nominally for one day in the week, and sometimes she received small sums to aid her in relieving the suffering poor.

Nevertheless, she gave away more than she received from both these sources, for she had a tender sympathy for those in want.

Amongst the fruits of these eight years' labour may be reckoned several inebriates saved ; for always since the Lord filled her heart with pity for her own husband, as the pledge of His answer to her prayers to save him, she has felt inexpressible compassion for all she has found addicted to this terrible vice, and has known that Christ could save even drunkards from their awful chains and fate.

Others, too, besides the Israelites already named, whom she has found living together without marriage, have been won to lawful wedlock, as well as to the Saviour.

No record save that of the recording angel has been kept of this eight years' work. Her own recollections, though very full and distinct, cannot of course grasp all the facts. She, however, recalls and counts up *seventy-seven families*, of which the German-Jewish was one, in which some one, or more, or all, were converted and received into various evangelical Churches under her direct efforts. And of this number she remembers *eleven families*, in which every member, *fifty-five persons* in all, came out as Christians, and took their place in the Church.

This brief and imperfect statement, of course, can give no adequate idea of the gladness, purity, virtue, light, love, joy, and hope sown along the pathway of this lowly worker during these sad, laborious, and yet glad and glorious years.

VI.—THE EVENING AND MORNING OF A NEW DAY.

The aged Christian's kindly benediction had now already begun to be fulfilled. Yet following this first period of usefulness, there came another, so much brighter, that all before it seems only preliminary to it.

This second period was preceded by a night of darkness. Before the evening of the first closed in, her light began to fade, her zeal to flag, and her step in following Christ began to lose its elastic vigour. Her home burthens in truth were heavy. To wash day after day for a little money to buy bread, fuel and clothing, and find it not enough, and then to be obliged, as she was at last, to sell one article of furniture after another, until the last thing of any value was gone; to watch over and minister to a husband who could not even dress and feed himself, and attend to all the household duties, the harder because there was so little with which to make her work easy, and to give an air of comfort to her home, and to look forward and see nothing better in prospect for the days to come; this was indeed a cheerless and heavy fate! And then to go her rounds from house to house, what time she could snatch from these wearisome burdens of the home, surely it could not but be expected that she should lose hope and fervour!

Indeed, what with this long and wearing service, the additional trials attending the death of her husband overbore her entirely, and prostrated her.

with sickness; and, for days and weeks her life seemed to be suspended upon a thread so slender, that no one would have been surprised any day by her death.

In this condition, alone upon her bed, her life came up in review from the first memory of the old woman's gentle hand upon her head, and fervent words in her ears, to the sale of her last piece of furniture, and the last words of her husband, "If it had not been for her I should have been lost for ever;" and she saw in it all no cause for complacency in herself, nor yet for murmuring against God. In her own heart, as its true state seemed to be opened to her, she saw a painful want of love, and humility, and earnestness, of which she had been somewhat aware before. She did not understand what the Lord was doing for her; but he was, in fact, awakening in her own heart a deep feeling of want, an unquenchable appetite for something better, for the higher Christian life, for the strength of an abiding faith in Jesus as an ever-present Saviour. At the same time, He was convincing her that for every thing, peace and pardon, as well as purity and power, her only hope was in the sovereign grace of God, and she apprehended, as she never had done before in so great a degree, that, if saved at all, it must be merely by the grace of God. And when her review was fairly and fully made, she resigned herself anew into the hands of the blessed Saviour, to live or die, as He might please, and if she should

live, then to be and to do what He should choose. Days and days of the sweetest, fullest, deepest communion and fellowship with Jesus, such as she had never before enjoyed, or even thought of as possible for any mortal on the earth, followed this new self-abandonment into the hands of Christ. During these heavenly days she was slowly recovering, and finally regained her full health and vigour.

VII.—HER NEW POWER AND POSITION.

The bed of sickness proved to Hannah, like the bodily afflictions of Job, her last great trial, and her afflictions like his, were the occasion of a new and glorious advancement in the life eternal, for in the end, God our Saviour so manifested Himself to her as to fill her with adoring wonder, and with perfect peace in him, whilst at the same time all confidence in herself was destroyed. She was taken out of self, and out of legalism, and baptized into Christ and into the grace of God, and so she was prepared, as she had never been before, to walk with Christ continually in the light, and to lean upon Him for daily bread, daily strength, daily grace, daily plans, daily wisdom, and daily success.

During all this time, while she was in the crucible under the Refiner's eye, preparing to reflect His image and extend His kingdom in the world, there was another part of the plan of God for her in progress. The Lord was shaping the affairs of the mission in such a manner as to make a place for her,

and when she had sufficiently recovered to listen to him, the good missionary in charge, who had watched over her through all her illness, proposed to give her a home in the mission, and twelve dollars a-month, if she would become one of his regular assistants. She accepted the proposition as a boon from God in answer to her prayers, and in fulfilment of the oft-remembered benediction.

Taking her new position, she entered upon her work with an overflowing heart. She had always had great faith in God, but now her faith was vastly strengthened. Her habit had always been to bear every one for whom she laboured, individually and by name, to the Lord in prayer, not for once, or twice, or thrice, and there end, but on and on until the answer came, and they were saved.

This being the case, it will not be wondered at that, as in the instance of her prayers for her poor intemperate husband, she often received such communications of the grace of God as gave her full assurance that her prayers were answered. Though the night of waiting might be long, the blessing came at last.

This prevalence with God gave her prevalence with man, and was one of the great powers by which she was so successful. And now that she was baptized into Christ, and found her all in Him, this power of prevalence was increased and brought constantly into use.

She, however, was anything but self-sufficient, and sought sympathy and aid from all around her.

As she had done with the Israelitish family, so she did with all. She not only carried them to the Lord in prayer, but she persuaded them to the church to hear from others, who, as she told them, could explain the Gospel to them better than she could. And then she interested ministers and Sunday-school teachers in those she brought to them for instruction, and told them just how they stood, to enable them the more intelligently to suit instruction, whether public or private, to their wants. This custom she continued now, and with increasing confidence and success in her new position. In this way her work threw work into other hands continually, and many an earnest worker gathered sheaves which, but for her, would never have come under his sickle. Yet, when she brought one thus to church or Sunday-school, and interested others in the case, she did not herself abandon it, but followed it up all the same, and never ceased until victory crowned their efforts and hers.

Her manner is perfectly natural and easy when she talks about religion, only her interest in it makes her still more animated than upon other subjects. And she approaches any one directly, taking it for granted that they will not only not be offended, but will be interested. Rebuffs, instead of destroying her hope, increase her earnestness, and thus she comes off victor in many an instance where another would be vanquished.

One of the secrets of her success is the wise use of that great key to the hearts of men which opened

them so freely to the blessed Saviour during His earthly mission—relief.

Many and many a heart, locked and barred against preaching and teaching, Bibles, books, and tracts, has opened to the touch of sympathy in word and deed from her, and when once open to her, she has easily brought in and introduced her Master also.

VIII.—THE OVERCOAT.

Gifts bestowed upon inebriates or their families are often worse than thrown away. They are not unfrequently converted into means for feeding still more the fires of the terrible appetite for drink. And many good people despair of ever benefiting permanently persons addicted to intemperance. On the contrary, this tract-missionary, as she had now become, had faith enough to grapple hopefully with even this strong enemy, this lion in her path, and, David-like, she was wont to come off conqueror in the battle.

One of the families that specially enlisted her sympathies was that of a carman, who spent all his earnings for drink. His wife and children suffered for clothing to make them decent and keep them comfortable. She relieved their necessities as best she could by the help of friends, and induced them to attend church and Sunday-school. The drinking husband and father looked on and was somewhat softened, to say the least, in his feelings toward religion and the Church. In bitter weather he himself

had to suffer from the storms and from the biting cold, for want of a heavy overcoat. The tract-missionary saw it, and well knew that the reason why was drink. She, however, did not say, "It serves him right. Pity he didn't have to freeze." But she cast about for relief, and found it in an old coat of her husband's (it was after her second marriage), for which he had now no more use. When she gave the coat to the man she said, "There, that will keep you warm and dry."

"What!" said he; "you are not going to give this to me?"

"Certainly. It belonged to my husband; but he don't need it any more; and he let me have it a-purpose for you."

"Well, you are a good woman, anyhow! I like you the best of any Christian I ever knew. I wish all that calls themselves Christians was like you."

"And you are a good man," said she, "in everything but one. I like you very much; but I should like you better if" (dropping her voice to a whisper) "you didn't drink."

"Who says I drink?" said he, firing up.

"I do," said she; "I smell your breath."

"Well, you're the first woman ever told me that."

"It's true, though, and you know it," said she, in tones of sympathy that reached his heart. "Yes, you know it; and you know that that is where all your money goes. If 't wan't for that, you'd have

plenty to buy clothes for your wife and children, and yourself too, and you'd be as nice a man as ever was. Now, s'pose you just quit, and sign the pledge, and go to church, and become a Christian;" and so she went on about himself and his little family until the big tears of his better manhood gushed out, and ran down his cheeks. Finally, he could resist no longer, and promised all she asked.

True to his promise, that day he signed the pledge, and the next Sunday he went to church. She followed him up; and, when, a few days later, in one of their evening meetings, he gave his heart to Jesus, and received the answering testimony of his acceptance by the Spirit of adoption in his heart, she knew it at the instant by the peace she herself received from the same heavenly source.

She gave this man an overcoat to cover him from the storm without, and this proved the key by which his heart was thrown open to her for the ushering in of One who clothed him with the garments of righteousness for ever. And now he is a prosperous man, the head of a happy family, well clad, fed, and sheltered for this world, with good prospects for the world to come, all due, under God, to the tract-missionary and her key.

IX.—THE CASTAWAY.

Allusion has been made to the second husband of the tract-missionary. Kindness, not in the form of gifts, but simply of words casually spoken, was the

means unwittingly of winning him to know her, and wittingly to seek the Saviour.

One day, in her rounds, she met a man at a certain place, and asked him if he loved the Lord.

"No," said he; "I'm a poor castaway sailor, and nobody cares for sailors."

His tones and words were those of a man utterly friendless in the world. Her sympathies were excited, and she answered—

"Oh, yes, the Lord cares for sailors. My husband was a sailor, and the Lord cared for him, and saved him, and he died a Christian; and I care for sailors. I cared for my husband, and prayed for him until he was converted, and when he fell sick I nursed him until he died. The Lord cares for you, and I care for you, and will pray for you if you want me to."

"No," said he; "nobody cares for sailors, nobody cares for me."

She handed him a tract, which he put in his pocket, and promised to read, and she bade him good-bye, and went on her way.

Born of French Catholic parents in Canada, he had suffered oppression at home, especially on account of the Church, from the influence of a step-mother—his own mother having died when he was four years old.

At last, he was driven out in mid-winter by these circumstances. On catechising-day, at church, he was caught playing a trick upon a boy in the seat

before him, and the priest undertook to awe him into quietness from fear of his supernatural power. "Don't you know," said he, "that God has given me power. I can fasten you to the seat by just willing it."

The boy, instead of being awed, had the temerity to test the priest, and answered, saying—

"Try it." And then, deliberately rising to show how powerless the priest was, he said again—

"Try it. If you can keep me here, I'll believe in you and your religion as long as I live."

Then going to the door, and taking his hat, he turned and repeated the challenge, and went out.

The priest of course reported the matter to his father, and the result was such a castigation as drove him to start that night, with a stick and a bundle, and twenty-five cents of money, for he knew not where.

It was a hard Canadian winter, and the vicissitudes of frost and snow, hunger and cold, severe as they proved to be, were only the bitter foretaste of trials still greater, lasting many years. His first refuge was as a farmer's boy, working for his bread. His next experience was as an apprentice to a blacksmith. Next he shipped as a whaler before the mast; then he was cast away by a shipwreck in the Indian Ocean; then he stranded in London city; and now he was a penniless wanderer up and down the streets of New York, in pursuit, first, of some long-lost acquaintances, and then of work to earn food to eat at his old trade of smithing.

He found work up town, and fumbling for a little money one day, he hauled out the tract, and opening it, these words struck him—

“WHY WILL YE DIE IN YOUR SINS?”

He folded it up again, and stored it in his pocket, but the words were not forgotten; and the incident recalled the conversation with the tract-missionary. Thoughts about these things kept coming up day after day, and at the same time the feeling of his friendless, homeless condition grew more and more oppressive; and at last he said within himself, “I do wonder whether that good woman does care for sailors as she said she did? and whether or not she does really care for me?”

At last he sought and found opportunity to see her again. And the end of the matter was the offer of his hand, and its acceptance by her, with this distinct stipulation, that he should become a Christian if he could be convinced of the truth and reality of religion.

They were married, and the next Sunday she asked him to go with her to church. He declined, and urged her to stay with him. She had no idea of what was the fact, viz., that he was trying her to see what value she set upon her religion. Yet she persisted in going, and told him distinctly, though in tones of sympathy and regret, that if need be, she should forsake all, even her husband, to follow Christ. She went. He remained. But he was con-

vinced, and in the afternoon went with her, and two weeks from that time was baptized and received into the Church, having made a bright and clear confession of his faith in Jesus.

X.—THE EMBRYO CONGRESSMAN.

Many a one now already successfully pursuing the path of life, in some one of its various walks, has been snatched by means of her ready sympathy and heroic faith from the course that leads to death, while yet in the early morning of his days. As one of the many, and as an illustration of her readiness to spring to the rescue in the moment of greatest peril, a single instance may be given.

One Sunday, seeing a bright, but wayward and wilful boy, break from his class and teacher, and take his hat and march out of the school, she followed him, and overtook him, and having called a halt, she asked him if he had heard the account of the lad who had lately done exactly what he was doing, left the Sunday-school, gone off in anger with his teacher, and, as a consequence, had the same day lost his life? He answered, No; and she then recounted the facts as they had happened, and appealed to him not to provoke a similar fate for himself, but to go back, submit to his teacher, as he knew he ought to do, beg his pardon, and be thenceforward a good boy, as he knew very well how to be.

He was moved, gave up, went back, took his place, and became one of the best boys in the class. That

was the turning-point with him. Probably if he had carried out his own purpose, and left the school, he would have been lost; as it was, he was followed up by the prayers of this remarkable woman, and in a few months, came out a Christian, joined the Church, and to-day he is a member of our American Congress.

Before attempting to give a numerical summary of the ascertained results of the tract-missionary's service during the twelve years from her first husband's death to the present time, some account should be given of the influence of her work for good beyond the immediate sphere of her own personal labour.

Her signal success has induced the employment of women in city mission work in various ways, in much greater numbers than would otherwise have been done, and at least one of the many won to Christ by her kind offices is in the service as a "Bible-woman."

But there is a chain of incidents so interesting in themselves, and so fully illustrating the far-reaching power of her influence for good through others, that it would not be right to withhold it; and as we have already had one of the persons concerned in this chain before us in the story of the "castaway," we group the others in another story, giving it a name from another of the actors, as

XI.—THE RINGLEADER.

The castaway, soon after his happy marriage and conversion, finding nothing better for himself, shipped again, and, in one ship after another, made four voyages before the mast.

The day he took his place aboard-ship he took his stand for Christ. Besides himself, there were seven in all in the forecastle, but he alone, of all, was a Christian. His comrades tried him to the utmost, but he stood firm, and before the end of his first voyage the Lord had given him two of them as his fellow-voyagers in the good ship Zion, bound for the haven of endless joy.

His second and third voyages were equally trying, and proved still further his steadfastness in the faith.

Upon his fourth voyage he had to deal with a comrade who put all his grace to the severest trial. There was no trick too rough, no joke too harsh, no indignity too great, no insult too keen, in the way of fun and frolic for him to heap upon the Christian. He seemed born to lead, and bred for mischief, and his genius for evil carried everybody with him; still the converted castaway was too much for him, as we shall see. He possessed his soul in patience, and Satan gained no advantage over him. And whilst they were in port in London, the sailors all went ashore on leave, except the Christian. He, as soon as they were well away, went below and

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began to pray for his comrades, and most earnestly for the ringleader, calling him by name. This man had forgotten something, and returned to get it, and came aboard whilst the other was in the midst of his earnest supplications, and he heard him pleading with the Lord to forgive him, bless him, and save him. After all he had done, this seemed incredible, and yet so it was. Here was this abused, insulted, yet patient and kind Christian man, not calling down the vengeance of God, but pleading with Him for mercy upon his own bitter persecutor. This was too much for him to bear. He could not stand it, his feelings broke down, and he wept like a child.

That night he volunteered to accompany the converted castaway to a certain chapel, and very soon came out and took his stand on shipboard, as Saul of Tarsus did in Damascus, in defence of the faith he had been deriding. The change was great, and the results are truly wonderful.

Whilst these things were taking place on ship and shore the other side of the Atlantic, a young girl was crossing from that side to this, and when she landed in New York was found by the tract-missionary wife of the converted castaway.

Her condition when she landed was bad enough, but her new-found friend washed her, clothed her, and shared with her her own bed for a time, and that time long enough to induce her to seek and find the Saviour, and then she secured for her a situation.

When the happy sailors returned, and told their marvellous story, the tract-missionary gave them in return the story, amongst others, of the coming and conversion of the young girl. The converted ring-leader was deeply interested in this account, and in the description given of the girl. So he sought her acquaintance, was pleased with her, pursued the matter, and persuaded her to accept his hand in marriage.

He soon quitted the sea, as did also the converted castaway; and they are all now successfully engaged in the great work of city missions, seeking diligently to scatter light in the darkness of our down-town districts, long since deserted by fashionable churches and popular ministers.

Of the one sailor and his success, we have enough in the scenes on shipboard to convince us that his life will not be a fruitless one on shore.

Of the other it is not too much to say that, like Saul of Tarsus, who excelled all others, first in his bitter persecutions, and then in his successful efforts to propagate the faith he had before sought to destroy, this ringleader in wickedness is now excelled by few if any in all the city in persuading men to become followers of the blessed Jesus, from whom, aforetime, he tried to turn all away.

XII.—THE SUMMARY.

The numerical results, as ascertained from the records of the mission, show that the work of this one woman, during the twelve years of her full service as

an assistant, are, as nearly as they can be separated from those of the missionary in charge, somewhat over seven hundred conversions, verified by the reception of the converts into various evangelical Churches, and tested by time.

This does not include the results of her previous eight years' work as a tract-visitor, which would swell the number to one thousand or more, nor of the work of her husband, or any other person converted by her instrumentality.

And it is a naked statement, which, of course, must fail to convey any true picture, any realising representation of the misery saved, and happiness brought to households and hearts, or of the public benefits conferred by taking men, women, and children from the highway of vice and crime, and placing them in the paths of virtue and prosperity, or of the good done to churches and Sunday-schools by increasing their life and power and numbers, or of the revenue of glory to the name of God our Saviour, or of the ultimate good which must surely spread far and near through so many new channels, and flow on through coming ages.


But aside from all this, we see enough already to fill us with adoring wonder at the wisdom and grace of God.

How amazing that such a woman, in such a place, should accomplish such a work! How strange that God should choose such an instrument, and use her to do so much!

AS AN EXAMPLE,

This work is both hopeful and instructive. It goes far to solve the double and doubly difficult problem of salvation for the masses, and salvation for the nations.

Here is a great city. Its growth, like that of the prophet's gourd, has been so rapid as to fill with amazement even those who dwell under its shelter; a city which, like London, adds annually to itself people enough to comprise a populous city by themselves; an exceeding great city, the circuit of whose streets would require, if a prophet were sent to denounce judgment upon it, not only a three days' journey, but a busy tour of more than thirty times three days' pedestrian toil. And like other great and growing cities, it has its fashionable quarters, into which wealth and respectability graduate, and gather to themselves every elegance, every luxury, even to elegant churches in ample numbers, luxuriantly seated and cushioned, and supplied with the most approved eloquence from the pulpit, and music from the choir; and its unfashionable districts, out of which graduate wealth and respectability, churches and all, and into which flow down from all the high places of the city the wrecked and the wretched. The churches are sold to be converted, one into a minstrel-hall, another into a theatre, another into a place for manufacturing mineral waters, another, it may be, into a place for drinking fire-waters,



another into a builder's shop, and another into a stable for horses. And the money received for them is taken, along with the wealth and respectability of the neighbourhoods, up into the high places of fashion, to build and endow fashionable churches. Drinking places, and houses of ruin, and places of vice, and halls of infidelity, under one guise or another, and dens of infamy and crime, multiply and take the place of the churches transplanted, and Satan seats himself firmly and deeply in the hearts and habits of the people, and has all his own way, and the garden of God is turned into a garden of the wicked one.

Now, into such a quarter as this last, a poor young thing, so ignorant of the world as not to know a fit of drunkenness from a fit of sickness, or the design of a sensualist from the benevolence of a friend, and so ignorant of letters as not to be able to read or write, is brought. She is entrapped into matrimony by a poor besotted man, so far gone in his burning pathway that, when he gives up drink, he becomes a helpless paralytic, and is set down by this man in this place, of all places the least hopeful, without a friend in the world, or an acquaintance near; and here, with the weight, at first, of her poor, miserable, inebriate husband to crush out hope and life, and afterwards with the burden of his support and her own upon her, by earnings at the wash-tub, besides her household duties and the constant care of her helpless husband, this poor young creature

is first herself converted to the Saviour, then wins her husband to Him also, and then in twenty years, all told, is the means of saving a thousand others. The number may be more or less. No matter; if it were not half so great, the example would suffice; if it were only five hundred, instead of a thousand, its inspiration to hope would still be very great; for if such a woman in such a place could in twenty years win even five hundred souls to Christ, what may we not hope from the work of a renovated Church within the remaining thirty years of the present century?

If a thousand, or even half that number, can be won from the dominion of Satan to the kingdom of God in one of the worst quarters of our city by one woman, how hopeful the work of winning the masses in all our cities, when once the masses of our Christian people undertake it in earnest!

But the force of this example is not limited to Christian work amongst the masses in our cities, it is hope-inspiring and suggestive for world-wide conquests, for if a woman in such a sphere could achieve so much, what may we not hope from the work of Christians in every sphere of life? Let every Christian do as she did, begin at home, grapple with Satan in his dominion over those nearest and dearest, and gain the victory, or rather, should we not say, grasp the work which God presents, and do with all our might that which our hands find to do,—diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord in all things, *and learn the art of prevalence*, and use it,

and go on from conquering to conquer,—and Satan's empire would soon give way.

Let every Christian banker amongst his own associates, and every Christian merchant amongst his friends, and every Christian lawyer in his circle, and every Christian sailor on shipboard and in port amongst his comrades, and every Christian soldier amongst his fellow-soldiers, and every Christian mechanic in his shop, and all Christians in all places and all circles, do their duty as Christian men and women, as this woman did hers at home, and in the community around her, and oh, how rapidly the kingdom of God would be extended !

Soon, soon—oh, how soon !—we should see all lines of life, all the great interests of society and the world, brought under the sway of Christ !

With such an example before us, who could despair of seeing the kingdoms of the world soon become the kingdoms of our Lord, even if everything should appear to be as much against it, in all the earth, as was the case here in this field of hers. What obstacles could be greater than those overcome by her? What means could be weaker than the efforts of a woman like her, in such a place?

But, happily for us, all things seem to favour hope. The vantage-ground of the cause of God never has been so high since the world began as at the present moment.

This woman's position in the ward where she began her work, and ours in the world, is reversed.

She was at the bottom ; we are at the top. She was bound ; we are free. She was oppressed with poverty and overburdened with dead weight ; we have the power and wealth of the world enlisted in Christian commerce, and art, and science, and government, to open for us the doors of the nations, and pave our way in them.

It is no more now, as in the days of old, when the cause of God, represented by Moses, had to meet the opposing power of a higher civilisation, even " all the wisdom of the Egyptians," intrenched in the institutions and backed by the power of government. Ours is the dominant civilisation of the world.

It is not with us as it was with the people of God in Babylon, when they were captive slaves, amidst a mighty people, proud of their culture, and strong in power.

Yet even Moses, through faith in God, could conquer the magicians, the king, and all the host of Egypt, and leave their high idolatry prostrate behind the march of God and his feeble people. And Daniel, by means of God-given wisdom, could win liberty for his nation, and proclamation from the throne, acknowledging the Lord God of Israel to be the God of all the earth, and commanding all people to serve and obey Him. We, however, are free not only, but are in the vanguard of progress and power amongst the nations.

The hitherto divided earth is rapidly becoming one again in the union of its peoples and nations

by means of Christian civilisation, with its nerves and ligaments of steam-impelled commerce, and its arteries and veins of electric-borne intelligence; and with this progress of reunion the progress of light from above keeps pace.

China, so long walled in, with all the world walled out, now seeks her place in the family circle of Christian nations, and that by means of an ambassador chosen because he is a representative of Christendom; and, at the same time, she employs a Christian missionary* to teach her statesmen wisdom, and instruct her teachers in Christian science and art and literature.

Japan opens her ports to our commerce, and meanwhile her feudal Daimios, her ancestral lords, begin to read the Bible, accept it as a revelation from God, and yield obedience to its faith.

Madagascar, after having put to death a missionary of Christ thirty years ago, crowns her queen on the very ground where the martyr-crown was put upon the brow of the one faithful unto death, and inscribes upon the over-arching canopy of the young queen's throne the proclamation, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will to men;" and follows up the coronation very soon by the queen's baptism, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

India, after the enslavement of women from time immemorial, and their perfect exclusion from educa-

* Dr Martin.

tional and social privileges, to the degradation of their children, and perpetuation of ignorance and superstition, now begins to open her zenanas—her women's quarters—to Christian women as teachers, with their Bibles and Christian school-books in hand, and the *mothers of India*, in the great centres of influence and fashion, are, practically and experimentally, accepting the Gospel in its light and life-giving power.

And glancing at the nations in this way wherever we may,—to Syria, to Africa, and the world over, we see everywhere the outstretched arms of peoples and kindreds and tongues waiting to welcome Christ our King.

Then, too, at home in Christendom, not to speak of other great and noble movements of recent origin, we see the *influence and power of woman* for work *amongst the masses* beginning to be appreciated and employed,—more than two hundred Bible-women at work, under Mrs Ranyard, in London alone, and all sustained by the gifts of the people, without one penny expended for collecting agencies, or a single application or appeal to any person for money.

We see, also, a steadily-increasing return to the simplicity and fulness of trust in the Lord, for both the means to carry on all Christian work, and for the Christians to carry it on, and for the power and wisdom to carry it on from conquering to conquest.

And we see the daily extension of a new life, the higher Christian life in the Church, experimentally

received, and practically manifested in such fruits as the new monthly journal, *The Christian at Work*, which, in a single year, the first of its existence, starting without capital, has paid its own way, and reached a circulation of eighty thousand.

Not to extend this glance at the world, whether at home or abroad, this is sufficient to indicate its readiness for the triumphant spread of light and truth the world over. And surely, with this state of the world in view, over against the example of this woman's work in one of the hardest of all fields, we cannot fail to take heart and spring to the conquest with perfect confidence of success.

Who can doubt, that if Christian men and women, merchants, statesmen, sailors, soldiers, artists, artisans, engineers (who build the railways and set up electric telegraphs), teachers, printers, and all in all lines of industry at home and abroad, would each, in the sphere where placed by the providence of God, emulate the example of this Christian woman, we should see the whole earth overspread by the gladdening, elevating, saving power of Christ, before the present century shall close?

Let us mark especially, and emulate the two things which gave success in this instance, and which are essential to success in every instance the wide world over,—a passion for souls, and the art of prevalence,—a compassion which gives no rest until souls are saved, and a faith which never lets go without the blessing.

CHAPTER VI.

SURPRISES.

IN the facts of Christian life and Christian work, as they have passed under review before us in the march of thought through preceding chapters, there is a divine logic which, in conclusion, it will be well to consider.

Unless all goes for nothing, it follows that, in order to realise the great and glorious results of a conquering Gospel for ourselves and for the conquest of the world to our Saviour, Christ himself must be accepted as our ever-present Saviour. Our faith must stand not alone or mainly in what He has done in the past, or what He is up in heaven for us, but in Him as He is now with us, and within us. We in Him and He in us. Our faith must accept Him as with us and within us. Our King to command us and plan for us; our Captain to lead us; our Counsellor to instruct and enlighten us; our sufficiency for all things; and our efficiency in all things. And we must look to Him in the fulness of trust that He will give us strength, wisdom, grace, to do all He gives us to do, and that He himself will signalise His own presence and power by such

miracles of grace and salvation as shall be convincing to the world that He is a present Saviour, mighty to save, strong to deliver, even as of old.

Müller of Bristol, with his orphan-houses built, and his 5000 orphans sustained, by money given in answer to faith in God, without ever soliciting a penny from any one on earth, tells us that he began this great work, not because he loved children so deeply, or was so very anxious that uncared-for orphans should have a refuge and a home, but more because he desired to show that God is truly a present God and Saviour, and will honour Himself and His promises by His providence responsive to faith, now as signally as he did in ancient times.

We want more of this God-honouring faith, and then we shall have more of God-honouring works in the conquering progress of His kingdom. Not only did the prophets and apostles, martyrs, and reformers excel us in faith, and so excel us in fruits, but our Puritan fathers, and their noble successors of the Wesleyan period, outstripped us by far; and if we examine their lives with this object in view, we cannot fail to see the cause why. They began their great work by a deep experience, a rich and full entrance into the knowledge of God, a firm, clear, and strong faith in Christ, and a burning love for the Lord and for souls, and a quenchless zeal for the salvation of men and the glory of God. The fire in their hearts was like the fires in the cabins of our pioneers in the forests. The fireplace of a pioneer's cabin extended

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What we want, then, is a living faith in the Saviour, a faith full and strong in our Almighty Captain and King, a fire kindled and blazing, which fills not only the whole of one side of our souls, but our whole souls, and which can be, and is perpetually renewed from the same sacred supply by the same blessed hand, and kept ablaze, full and strong, to the end. This is the great want of the Church and of all Christians to-day, and may God grant us to receive it, and have it. The divine logic of the facts before us has a no less beneficent application for those who are not yet in the Church.

If the kingdom of God is supernatural, and is established and built up in the hearts of men by supernatural power, surprises must, of course, attend its progress. Revelations from heaven could not fail to surprise dwellers upon earth. One could not be born into a new conscious life, of a higher, nobler kind, without conscious amazement. A new world of invisible realities, higher, holier, happier, better in every way than the old world of things visible, could not be unfolded to any mortal man without filling him with wonder.

The old Grecian philosopher, when he perceived the principle of the lever, leaped from his bath exclaiming, Eureka! Eureka! But what was his discovery compared with that of a world of hitherto unknown principles and powers? Columbus and his company manifested their emotions in many ways when, after their long voyage and heart-sickening dis-

couragements, their dreams at last were realised. But what was the discovery of a new continent to that of God and heaven, immortality and eternal glory?

If surprises did not attend such grand discoveries, we might justly conclude there was no reality in them.

No man could receive from God a faith which is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen, and by the power of this realising faith have the grand and glorious realities of the revelation God has given us in His Word brought home to him in his own heart and soul, and yet remain unmoved with wonder and amazement.

What are the facts? Are men so moved? How was it with the converted sceptic? He was convinced in the first place by this very logic. His brother's account of his own surprises in conversion, all so different from his own imaginings, and so wonderful, heavenly, and divine, first shook his faith in his own specious pantheistic speculations, and led him to put the matter to an experimental test. Then, when this was done, what amazement filled his soul when Jesus, in His love and meekness on the cross, and our heavenly Father, in His infinite wisdom, tenderness, care, and kindness in His works and ways, were revealed to him! How was it with Job in his great advancement? What wonder, awe, and admiration came upon him when, out of the whirlwind, God spoke to him, and carried him out of himself and all his sorrows up into the heavens, and out into the mountains and seas, to behold the works of wisdom

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and goodness in creation and providence, and to know God by the sight of faith in fuller vision than ever before ! And Jacob : how full of surprise his soul at Bethel, when he exclaimed, " Surely God is in this place, and I knew it not ! How dreadful is this place ! It is the house of God and the gate of heaven ! " And the disciples, on the day of Pentecost, and all the others, on all occasions of special progress, whether in any one soul or on the general scale, surprise always came with the advance.

And now, on the other side, if surprise does so attend the progress of the kingdom—surprise such as could come alone from things supernatural and divine—then is not the kingdom itself of God ?

If you tell a man, as the sceptic's brother told him, that conversion cannot be the result of one's own imaginings, because it is always different *in toto* from all he has before imagined, and that it must be God's own work, because in it God is revealed to the soul, as no one but Himself could reveal himself ; and the man makes experiment of the facts, seeks his Saviour, and finds Him, and finds himself filled with amazement and delight in the realisation of things heavenly and divine, such as it had never before entered into his heart to conceive, and finds himself, heart and soul, radically changed, as no power but God's could change him ; surely that man could not but accept the kingdom as of God. One inducted still deeper into its wondrous things, as was the patriarch Job, surely could not doubt

whether they were of God. The hundred and twenty in the upper chamber, with the fire-crowns on their heads, and new languages on their tongues, and the wonderful works of God unfolded in their hearts, could not doubt.

Here, then, is the divine logic by which the Gospel is to be propagated in the world—the logic of facts, the logic of experience. “Ye are my witnesses of these things, and so also is the Holy Ghost, given unto them that believe,” saith our Saviour. Ye are to witness to these divine realities; ye are to tell all the world what Christ does for the souls of men: how He sets up His kingdom in the heart; how He gladdens all the life; how He takes one out of the quicksands of speculation and sets him on the solid ground of revelation realised in his soul; how He lifts him out of the horrible pit and mire of sin, and establishes him on the rock, with clean robes upon his back, and new songs in his heart; and how He gives him a solid hope of heaven and complete victory over death and the grave.

This ye are to witness to all the world as true and real. And then the Holy Ghost takes up your testimony, carries it home to the heart with convincing power; and when any repent and believe, then He witnesses in their hearts the glorious reality of all you have said, and more, and makes them witnesses in turn.

We are by no means to despise the logic of evidences, external and internal, to the revelation God

has given us in His sacred Word. Miracles and prophecy are sure seals and signatures from God's own hand. The truths revealed show their origin to be divine. None but God can reveal God. The immortal, eternal, invisible, only wise God can make Himself known as He has done in the Bible; but how far man is from being able to unfold the perfections of the living and true God, let the miserable attempts of the heathen world, in comparison with the wonderful embodiment in the Bible, witness. In all the writings esteemed sacred in all the world, there is nothing to compare with the sublime but simple facts concerning God given in His Word. All other sacred writings, like the sacred idols, are wretched earthly things as compared with the heavenly and glorious truths in the Word of God. No man untaught of God ever could have conceived the facts revealed of God.

But it is when these great and heavenly realities are brought home to the heart by the power of God himself, that these evidences have living value and effective power. The testimony of living witnesses, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, sealed by that of the living God himself within the hearts of men,—this is the grand means ordained of God for carrying the triumphs of his kingdom to all lands and every heart.

The logic of surprises has a farther reach : it affects not only this world, but the next, and obtains through all eternity as well as time.

Our Saviour himself has given us some clue to the understanding of this matter, and the apostles have recognised it also.

In the great judgment discourse of our Lord to His disciples, He presents the surprises of that day in vivid light. The good are welcomed, and the evil are banished by the Judge, and the grounds are announced in each case, and both sides are filled with amazement. On the one side they say : " When, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee ; naked, and clothed thee ; sick or in prison, and visited thee ? " And on the other side, they exclaim also : " When, Lord, saw we thee hungry, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee ? "

Both sides are filled with surprise, the one with a glad surprise, and the other sad.

The welcome home to heaven, and the banishment away, are, however, only the beginning of the end. The entrance into the courts of bliss and glory—oh ! what an amazing day that will be. And the entrance into the courts of death—oh ! what surprises meet there the banished one ! The apportionments in heaven, too, will surprise us all, for the first shall be last and the last shall be first—so our Saviour has informed us. All will be kings and priests unto God. All who overcome at all will sit with Christ on His throne, receive His new name, eat of the hidden manna, be pillars in His temple, rule the nations with a power like that of a potter with his rod of iron amidst

his own vessels. But he who has used well his five talents here on earth shall have sway over ten cities in the boundless realm above ; and he who has improved his two talents shall rule five cities ; and he who has hidden his talent shall have to start afresh on nothing, and they who have refused the reign of Christ on earth shall be refused by Him, and slain with death eternal before His face.

We see these things now far away in the dim and distant future, as we see vessels or mountains afar off through a glass darkly, and yet they are very near to come. We soon shall see them, as now we see each other, face to face. Then we shall understand completely what now is only shadowed forth to us.

The principle, however, is entirely clear. We are human, and God divine. The things concerning Himself are so high, so grand, and glorious, and so good and beautiful—so much higher, better, more beautiful, and glorious than any merely human conceptions, that they always create a joyful amazement in our hearts.

We are finite, and God is infinite, but we are ever growing. The things of God, therefore, to be revealed to us are without limit, and will be always fresh and new, and always commensurate with our never-ending increase of capacity to understand them. Eternal life in heaven, like eternal life on earth, therefore, is to be a series of glad surprises. The unfoldings from time to time are to fill us with fresh joy and wonder ; and we are to live for ever in a certain

joyful looking for of glorious things to come, even as the apostle represents the lost as in the attitude of awful expectation, as if wrecked in a sea of fire, and the billows ever and anon, each higher than the last, breaking over them,—the attitude of “a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries.”

O brethren! to-day, to-day, while the day lasts, before the night cometh, let us be up and doing! Let us stand up in Jesus! Let us be loyal to Him as our King, lean upon Him as our Counsellor, look to Him for His power, and give ourselves wholly to His work! Amen, and amen!

THE END.

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